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DISSERTATION TITLE:

**The Chosen Voices in HIV/AIDS Education:
An Exploration of how Primary School
Educators Communicate about the HIV/AIDS
Pandemic.**

By

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Humanities, University of Kwa- Zulu Natal**

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In School of Educational Studies

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SUPERVISOR: Dr. Labby Ramrathan

DECLARATION

I, SHIVANI MAHARAJH (Registration Number: 204001378) hereby declare that this dissertation, entitled, ***“The Chosen Voices in HIV/AIDS Education: An Exploration of how Primary School Educators Communicate about the HIV/AIDS Pandemic”***, is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or at any other University.

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28/03/2006

Date

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late maternal grandmother, Jamuni Singh (06/02/1923-20/03/2003), whose words of wisdom and encouragement will forever more reside in my heart and in my mind. She has been instrumental in my development as an individual, and in the shaping of my character and personality. Her quiet and unassuming demeanor despite her achievements in life is what always stood out. Her preoccupation with assisting others in what ever way that she could has inspired me to embark on this project.

My grandmothers' strength of character and perseverance in any task that she undertook in her life's duration has been a constant source of inspiration throughout the writing up of this dissertation. Her unquestionable faith in spirituality, and in Hinduism, in particular, both of which she had passed on to me, has also held me in good stead as I embarked on this novel journey into the exciting, yet intimidating world of research. My undying love for her together with my unyielding faith in God, are major contributory factors in the completion of this research project.

“Always hold onto your dreams and do everything within your power to make them a reality. Nothing comes without hard work, but this will be duly rewarded”

These ever famous words of my grandmother are what always guided me when confronted with any challenge that presented itself during the course of my research. I will always be eternally grateful to her, as all my successes in life can be attributed to her in some way or another. Long live the memory of Mrs. Jamuni Singh!

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ABSTRACT

The rapid rate, at which HIV/AIDS is being spread, is changing the face of modern society.

The alarming statistics revealed by research, bears testimony to this fact. According to Bennell (2003), the total number of HIV/AIDS maternal and two-parent orphans for sub-Saharan Africa is expected to increase from 9.85 million in 2001 to 18.67 million in 2010.

Education has a pivotal role to play in effectively dealing with the effects of the pandemic, as well as in creating awareness among learners on HIV/AIDS preventative education.

The chief medium through which ideas are conveyed and awareness is raised, is through the use of language.

The focus of this dissertation was to critically explore the language used by educators within the context of HIV/AIDS Education, at primary school level. This was done in two ways. The first was conducting an in-depth analysis of documents pertinent to HIV/AIDS Education, in an attempt to ascertain which themes, concepts and terms frequently feature in these various documents. The second was exploring these themes, concepts and terms with regard to how these were perceived and understood by the participants in the study.

The translation of the meanings the participants attached to these concepts and terms, and how these translated into learning activities within the classroom context, received attention during classroom and lesson observations.

A case-study design within the qualitative mode of inquiry was employed. Document analysis, observation and in-depth interviews were used to obtain data pertaining to the area of study. Three Life Orientation educators, from a suburban, co-educational school in the Kwa – Zulu Natal area, participated in the study. The Critical Discourse Analysis framework informed the study.

The study also explored the usage of non-verbal signs and suggestions to convey meaning and understanding among learners. The participants' predispositions, ideologies and pre-conceived notions of what was appropriate, in terms of themes explored within the context of HIV/AIDS education, were also examined in light of any bearing these might have had in the process of facilitating understanding among learners. Due consideration was given to contextual factors, and how these might have influenced the processes of creating meaning and understanding among learners.

The findings revealed by this research, provide valuable insights into some of the interpretations of some of the terms and concepts that are commonly associated with HIV/AIDS by educators. In addition, they present the possibility of alternate meanings of these terms and concepts, suggesting that multiple meanings are possible within the context of HIV/AIDS education. The implications of this study for classroom practice are numerous.

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CHAPTER: 1 – AN OVERVIEW

1.1. An Introduction to the Study

The catastrophic statistics and insights related to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, with which we are constantly confronted, whether in the media or through some other form, such as the reporting of research findings, create a state of distress and anxiety amongst those individuals with a vested interest. “What is the way forward?” one might ask. Education certainly has a pivotal role to play in the transformation of such a state of affairs. This has been acknowledged by many educational and health experts (Walsh, 1996; Boler, 2003; Department of Education, in the National Policy on HIV/AIDS, 1999).

Walsh (1996) believes that teachers are now asked to face the newest challenge in their role as advocates for educational reform. However, since the necessary intervention initiatives involve a shift in attitudes and a change in behaviour patterns, the situation is somewhat complex. According to Boler (2003) many educators, are unwilling, or do not have the ability to empower students to allow them to fully express who they are and what education can potentially mean for change in their communities and in society at large.

Too often, our own preconceived notions of what constitutes socially-accepted behaviours tend to influence how we engage in discourse with learners on HIV/AIDS. The end-result may not always be positive, in that, many inaccuracies and misconceptions are borne out of the inability to communicate clearly and accurately about issues pertaining to HIV/AIDS.

The issues of underage sex, drinking, access to drugs, arcade gambling and violence frequently pervade the media. From a moral perspective this creates a state of panic. Health education programmes may be provided in an attempt to deal with issues which are commonly associated with HIV/AIDS. However such programmes evoke what Schostack (1993) refers to, as “double-binds.” These issues are difficult to talk about, especially in the school context. Hence these programmes seem to fail to meet their intended outcomes.

According to Berne and Huberman (1996), the typical mode of instruction employed in these programmes takes on a preaching tone, or the tone of the “expert” delivering information. These initiatives fall short in that they lack a real engagement with the circumstances surrounding the decisions pertaining to issues, such as drug consumption, peer pressure and so on, and how these fit into the life experience of the individual.

According to Sloan and Myers, in Taylor and Vinjevoold (1999), AIDS was responsible for forty percent of deaths (the greatest single cause) among South Africans aged 15-49 years, and it was projected that AIDS would cause a threefold increase in deaths among children by 2010. According to the World Bank (2000), although only ten percent of the world’s population lives in sub-Saharan Africa, eighty five percent of deaths from AIDS have occurred in this region. In addition a systematic review of approximately sixty published and unpublished studies on the extent to which South African adolescents engage in unsafe sexual behaviour, conducted by Flisher and others (1999), revealed the following valuable insights:

- For the majority of young South Africans, sexual activity starts in the mid teens, with the national age average of first intercourse being fifteen years of age for girls and fourteen years of age for boys;

-Significant numbers of young people have never used a condom during sexual intercourse. In some studies, over ninety percent of the girls surveyed had never used a condom. Of those who had used condoms, only a minority report they always use a condom and;

-Most non-virgin school-going learners have had one or two partners. However, less than thirty percent engage in sexual intercourse with numerous partners. Males report more sexual partners than females.

These alarming statistics and research findings express the urgency of appropriate intervention initiatives at school level within the education system. This has been duly recognized, as is evident in the National Policy on HIV/AIDS (1999). The policy stipulates the establishment of a compulsory, ongoing HIV/AIDS programme for learners at all public schools. The manifestation of such initiatives has differed, in practice, from school to school, hence impacting on the success rate of these programmes. According to Boler (2003), these can be attributed to, differences in the format they assume and the manner in which these are conducted, who administers these programmes, the time allocated to such initiatives, the availability and quality of the resources used in lessons, the success rate of these programmes and such like.

Pliskin (1997) believes that communicating clearly about HIV/AIDS is indispensable and essential in addressing and effecting meaningful behaviour change, regarding risky sexual practices among youth. If the intended messages are communicated in a manner that leaves them open to many ambiguities, this may ultimately influence the meaning-making process and hence become problematic.

According to Pica, in Brindley (1994), the role of transmitting meaning through language cannot be emphasized enough. Reversing knowledge, attitudes and practices with regard to violence and sex that are associated with HIV/AIDS, can be supported by scientific principles. It is the understanding of these principles that give rise to meaning, and possibly behavioural changes with regard to unsafe and risky sexual practices.

Language, which is the chief medium through which knowledge and information are conveyed, is instrumental in creating meaning and understanding. Since intervention initiatives regarding HIV/AIDS education and prevention frequently involve the cascading of information (terms and concepts associated with HIV/AIDS, discussions on topical issues around HIV/AIDS) and the promotion of certain “safer” behaviours over other risky practices, it becomes imperative that the understandings and meanings associated with these, as well as the assumptions that underpin these, be critically examined. According to the National Policy on HIV/AIDS (1999), it is the educators who are responsible for facilitating HIV/AIDS education at school level.

My study attempts to critically explore the language used by primary school educators within the discourse on HIV/AIDS prevention and education. My point of departure will be to examine and understand the language employed by educators when engaging in dialogue and discourse about HIV/AIDS with their learners. Some of the key issues that will be addressed include, an analysis of what educators understand by key concepts and terms associated with HIV/AIDS, how they access and make meaning of these ideas and how they communicate about these issues within the classroom context.

In Chapter One an overview of the study is presented. This entails the statement of purpose, the critical questions that are to be addressed in the study, a brief explanation of what the study sets out to do and how it intends to achieve this (the methodology used). A discussion on the ethical considerations involved in the study also receives attention in this chapter, as does the contextual factors.

Chapter Two presents an extensive review of the literature related to the area of study. The review of literature focuses on drawing attention to where the “gaps and silences” lie in the discourse on HIV/AIDS and how these influence meaning and understanding within the context of HIV/AIDS education. A discussion on the framework within which the study was contextualized follows suit. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), how it was conceptualized, its’ basic tenets and how it was used in the study, are the areas that are addressed in the second half of this chapter.

Chapter Three addresses the issue of methodology. It starts with drawing a distinction between method and methodology. The study was essentially a qualitative one, with a case-study design. The research instruments used in the data collection process are outlined next. These included document analysis, lesson observation and semi-structured interviews. The procedures involved in the selection of the research site and in the selection of the participants are also discussed. The limitations of the different research tools employed and the measures implemented to address these, receive attention in this chapter as well.

Chapter Four is a detailed analysis of the data obtained in the study. A rich in-depth description of the research site and the participants in the study receive attention. The emergent issues in the documents reviewed and in the interviews and lesson observations conducted in the study, enabled the categorizing of these findings into themes that are explored in the analysis of the data. A detailed description of these themes forms the basis of this chapter. The similarities and differences among the participants' responses are explored. Through the interrogated response mode of inquiry, any inconsistencies that were evident in the study are explored. The data collected in the post- observation interview sessions formed the basis of this analysis.

In the final chapter, that is Chapter Five, conclusions based on the study are drawn. Recommendations in light of the research findings are offered. The limitations of the study and the attempts to minimize its' effects on the research process, also receive attention. Possible areas of extension on the research topic are also suggested.

In the ensuing sections of the chapter, the objectives of the study and the statement of purpose are presented. This is followed by the critical questions that guided the study. A rationale for embarking on this research project is provided, as is an explanation of how the study was conceptualized. A brief description of the methodology employed is also offered. Due attention to ethical considerations in the study is given. A discussion on the signature and voice of the researcher, as well as how these impacted on the reporting of this study, is provided. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the attempts that were made to address the contextual factors that were prevalent in the study.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

Essentially this study sets out to attain the following objectives:

- critically examine the availability and quality of the resources and documents related to HIV/AIDS education that are being utilized by teachers at school level;
- explore the terms and concepts that frequently pervade the HIV/AIDS discourse in relation to how educators interpret, understand and assign meaning to these;
- attempt to gain an understanding of how the educators' own understanding, of the terms and concepts that are commonly associated with HIV/AIDS, influence the manner in which they engage with learners on topical issues and related themes. This is to be achieved through a deep and critical analysis of the language teachers use to convey meaning and understanding among the learners.

1.3. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the language used by primary school educators within the discourse on HIV/AIDS prevention and education.

1.4. Critical Questions

The critical questions that guide this study are as follows:

1.4.1. What do educators understand by the key concepts and ideas that emerge, in the available policies and material resources on HIV/AIDS prevention, within the school context?

1.4.2. How does the educator's understanding of key concepts and ideas associated with HIV/AIDS prevention, influence how he or she engages and communicates with learners within the classroom context?

1.5. Rationale for the Study

The rationale for the chosen area of study has professional, personal, moral and educational dimensions attached to it, as I will highlight in the discussion that follows. The Statement of Policy by the ex-Minister of Education, in The Strategic Plan 2003-2005 (Department of Education; 2003), has reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring proper access to appropriate information on HIV/AIDS by both educators and learners. In fact this is explicitly stated as one of the objectives of the proposed HIV/AIDS programme contained in the policy.

This is in accordance with the National Policy on HIV/AIDS (1999), which emphatically states that an ongoing life-skills and education programme must be implemented at all schools. It also states that age-appropriate education on HIV/AIDS should be integrated in the life-skills programme, with the aim of providing information and developing the skills necessary for the prevention of HIV transmission. Whilst it may be true that some of our religious beliefs about sexual morality may pose challenges for educators regarding the discussion of sex with children, we cannot expose young people in our care to life-threatening situations when we have information that could equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to make responsible decisions regarding their behaviours pertaining to sexual relations. This study attempts to understand how the policy intentions are translated into learning activities at the school site, from a linguistic perspective.

Being a primary school educator, I feel compelled to explore the fact that even though resources that could be used in intervention programmes are forthcoming from the department and the issues relating to the HIV/AIDS discourse are being addressed at school level, learners are still engaging in unsafe sexual practices. I feel a deep sense of moral obligation to investigate what some of the shortfalls of the instruction being offered at school level are with regard to the topic under discussion.

Language serves as a vehicle to understanding, thereby facilitating the process of learning. If we acknowledge the instrumental role that language plays in the learning process, it becomes imperative that we explore the linguistic forms utilized in the HIV/AIDS discourse. This study attempts to understand how language and meaning-making influences the HIV/AIDS discourse within schools. In addition, it can serve as a means of informing educators and help shape the teaching and learning activities within the classroom.

Educators' understanding of key concepts certainly impacts on how he or she approaches particular areas of study and this in turn influences how the learners will access this knowledge. Based on this premise, my study attempts to investigate how educators understanding of key concepts associated with HIV/AIDS impacts on the learners understanding and accessing of such information and knowledge.

Reddy (2003), in her research, found that even though learners were aware of the consequences involved in risky and unsafe sexual practices, they still engaged in such behaviours. This is distressing in that it points to possible inadequacies of existing school intervention initiatives. The reasons as to why knowledge does not always translate into practice, needs to be looked at. This study attempts to explore why knowledge does not always translate into changes in attitude and behaviour among school learners.

Brown (1990) contends that we find a large amount of information embedded in language situated in traveling- at airports, customs, posts, at large international railway stations, on fast international trains, or in international hotels, where the topic of conversation may be expected to refer to the location, or to expanding areas of leisure activity- sports, photography, pop music, and fashion. Such topics do not require knowledge of any particular culture to understand, but simply some acquaintance with westernized cosmopolitan culture which one is quite likely to have encountered on television all over the world.

Frequently promiscuous behaviours such as smoking, alcohol consumption, drug usage, speed driving and sexual relations are depicted in a positive light across various media-related and social arenas. The sensations experienced by engaging in such behaviours, tend to be over-rated and downplay or completely ignore the consequences of such actions.

Young adults are constantly bombarded with such images, which frequently fail to show the repercussions of risky practices. Consequently this, has given rise to much confusion among our youth. In a way, the media has typically served to misguide these children. Educators, not only have a responsibility to engage meaningfully with their learners, but also to empower them to make informed decisions based on their own learner' knowledge.

In order to successfully do so, educators need to critically assess their levels of understanding of key concepts associated with HIV/AIDS, as well as, critically examine the factors that could inhibit and constrain this understanding. This is one of the first and vital steps necessary to ensuring that the messages that teachers are sending out, do in fact support the intended outcomes, and not contradict them. This study sets out to explore educators' understanding of concepts and terms that are commonly associated with HIV/AIDS education, in an attempt to illuminate the relation this understanding bears to the processes of creating meaning and facilitating understanding among learners.

According to Boler (2003), the educational response to HIV/AIDS is significant, as the underlying belief that every person has the right to information on HIV has led to a concern that barriers or silences in communication around HIV/AIDS are impeding efforts in the classroom. An unchallenged culture of silence can only serve to exacerbate the AIDS epidemic and increase confusion, denial and stigmatization. Such a culture sends out the message that sex is not a topic for discussion and that it is evil, dirty, and wrong.

Research conducted by Action Aid in India and Kenya, as cited in Boler (2003), revealed that attempts to deliver HIV/AIDS education are constrained by a wider crisis in education but more specifically, by social and cultural restraints in discussing HIV/AIDS, sexual relations and power inequalities. These constraints manifest themselves in the practice of “selective teaching”, in which messages on HIV/AIDS are either not communicated at all, or restricted to overly-scientific discussions without direct reference to sex or sexual relationships. In some cases sex is discussed, but only within “acceptable” boundaries of abstinence. The fear of parental disapproval was cited as playing a pivotal role in omitting HIV/AIDS lessons laid out in the curriculum, or in teaching these lessons without any direct reference to sex or human relations.

In the same study, selective teaching in Kenya appeared to be linked to negative stances towards condoms and safe sex, with fifty seven percent of Kenyan students being against having access to condoms. Thirty five percent of Indian students reported having been taught about HIV and never having been taught about sex. Discussion of HIV without direct reference to sex, or advocating abstinence without mentioning safe sex, cannot work. Instead this approach gives rise to notions of HIV being linked to immorality and this leads to a “them, not us” attitude, promoting discrimination. In addition it fails to assist young people who are sexually active, making it less likely that they will seek advice or personalize their risk of becoming HIV positive.

Further, Boler (2003) asserts that silences in communication over the issue of condoms or messages other than abstinence, arise out of a paradox of safer sex. In the case of young people, this paradox can manifest itself as a tension between two assumptions. The first is that young people do not and will not have pre-marital sex, and the second is the necessary assumption needed to discuss condoms, that being young people do have pre-marital sex. These preconceived notions of what sexual behaviours are “acceptable” for young people at a specific age, certainly impacts on the manner in which educators engage in dialogue and discussion on HIV/AIDS with their learners.

It is evident from the above research findings that knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS education does not always translate into changes in attitude and behaviour among school learners. This study attempts to contribute to the discussion surrounding the exploration of why this may be the case.

It is hoped that by conducting my research, I will not only bring to the fore the issues that educators experience with regard to the HIV/AIDS discourse, but will also enable educators to critically examine their own understanding of concepts associated with HIV/AIDS so as to rethink through areas that may require attention. It is intended that by alerting educators with regards to how their understanding impacts on their learners and on the process of translating knowledge into action, the consequences which frequently arise from the myths and misconceptions surrounding HIV/AIDS, may be minimized if not alleviated altogether.

1.6 The Research Site and Participants

The study was conducted at a co-educational urban primary school in the Durban Metropolitan area, Kwa-Zulu Natal. Through purposive sampling, three Life Orientation teachers participated in the study. The rationale for employing such an approach, and for the selection of the research site, is explained in the methodology section of the dissertation.

1.7. A Brief Discussion on the Methodology used in this Study

This study was a qualitative one within a case study design. The instruments used were document analysis, pre-observation interviews, classroom and lesson observations and post-observation interviews.

Document analysis occurred throughout the study. Documents used in this regard included; the National Policy on HIV/AIDS for all Educators and Learners in Public Schools (1999), The Emergency Guidelines on HIV/AIDS for Educators, The School Policy on HIV/AIDS, and related materials and resources, including textbooks used in the HIV/AIDS intervention initiatives at the school under study [Refer to Appendix:1].

Pre-observation interviews were conducted with all three participants in the study prior to the observation of classroom lessons on HIV/AIDS. These were done with the primary objective of exploring the educators' engagement with policy documents, material resources and relevant documents pertaining to the HIV/AIDS discourse.

Another intended outcome of conducting these interviews was to attempt to gain an understanding of how these educators interpreted and processed the information available to them, with regard to the meanings that they attached to the terms and concepts commonly associated with HIV/AIDS. At this stage of the data collection, an attempt was also made to gain insight in terms of the training received by the participants on HIV/AIDS, and how this influenced and informed the manner in which they used language to convey meaning and understanding among learners about HIV/AIDS[Refer to Appendix: 2].

The observation of classroom lessons of a week's duration formed the basis of post-observation interviews. An observation schedule guided this process [Refer to Appendix: 3]. Here the sole intention, was to explore the language used by the teacher to create meaning and understanding among learners on HIV/AIDS. Field notes were taken as a means of recording the data obtained.

The post-observation interviews [Refer to Appendix: 4] were an attempt to gain greater depth and understanding to the chain of events that transpired within the classroom context. Any inconsistencies that were noted between what the participants expressed in the pre-observation interviews and what actually occurred in the classroom, were explored through the “interrogated response” mode of inquiry. This is explained fully in Chapter Two. This study is placed within the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, which is elaborated upon in Chapter Two. A detailed discussion on the methodology employed in this study occurs in Chapter Three of this dissertation.

1.8. Ethical Considerations

1.8.1. What do Ethical Issues Entail?

According to Simons and Usher (2000), ethical issues can be viewed as immanent in any act of knowledge production. They (Simons and Usher; 2000) contend that ethical issues relate to issues of rightness and justifiability, especially as they concern relations with others or consequences for others. Broadly speaking, this implies that the researcher should act responsibly.

This encompasses among others, respect for self and others, due consideration for social justice, human rights, norms and expectations, interacting in a manner that does not exploit or hurt others and where there is conflict between various values or norms, to seek balance between these. Essentially conflicts are inherent in ethical considerations but rather than viewing these as deterrents, the researcher should embrace such conflicts as they direct him or her toward seeking some sort of resolution in the research process.

According to House, in LeCompte and Schensul (1999), ethics is a situated practice and ethical principles are best discussed in concrete situations as there are a multitude of factors that can make a difference in particular contexts. Whilst broad principles or codes to guide ethical decision-making are important; as they provide an essential framework and reference point for checking the integrity and consistency of our actions (and those of others), thereby fostering the building of trust; these need to be interpreted and applied in context, taking into account not only the politics but the interaction of specific persons and relationships that are present in the study.

Simons and Usher (2000) contend that research must be rational and virtue oriented. Values should be approached critically. The facts, the methodology used, the theories and procedures employed in the research process should also be approached critically. Researchers need to explicitly reveal their values, assumptions and procedures as these invariably influence the research process. An ethical approach that advocates constant questioning, with an open grasp both of the self and of the other, is highly desirable.

In this regard, I provide an account of my background as a teacher-researcher in terms of my subject preferences, engagement with policy documents and resources pertaining to HIV/AIDS, training undertaken, experience and personal predisposition. These are explicitly stated in the section on “Voice and Signature” in this chapter (Section 1.9) and also unfold and present themselves in various forms throughout the dissertation.

1.8.2. Responsiveness to the Other

According to Simons and Usher (2000), responsiveness refers to the researcher-participant relationship. The relationship of the researcher with all those parties implicated in the research, including colleagues, is of significance in this regard.

My role as teacher- researcher enabled me to deal with sensitive issues that had arisen in the process with a greater degree of empathy than any other outsider researching this particular institution. Being part of the institution myself, I was able to identify with the concerns and challenges faced by the participants in the study. Likewise, they were able to identify with me. This reciprocal relationship allowed for easier access to participants and to data. Establishing a mutual relationship of trust was consequently much easier than it would have been, had I chosen to conduct the research at any other school.

1.8.3. Gaining Access

Johnson, in Simons (2000) sees gaining access as an important first stage in planning any educational research. Since I conducted the research at the institution I work at, gaining access to participants and to information, posed minimal problems.

Participants in the study offered their information and assistance at times that were convenient for them. These were negotiated between the participants and me. Participation in this study was done purely on a voluntary basis. No form of coercion was used to influence participation in the study.

With regard to the interviews, these were scheduled at times convenient for the participants. These were frequently done in the breaks, the non-teaching periods and after school, when learners were dismissed. The venues for the interviews were negotiated with the interviewees. Participants usually opted for their base classrooms or their offices. This allowed for the creation of a comfortable and non-threatening environment.

The fact that the participants were familiar with me since I was part of the teaching staff at the institution under study, made the establishment and maintenance of a trusting relationship easier to formulate and sustain.

1.8.4. Informed Consent

According to Anderson and Benson, in Simons and Usher (2000), informed consent implies participants being free of coercion or deception, having an understanding of the following: the process by which the data is to be collected, the intended outcomes of the research process, and the uses of the research, and as individuals or groups, having the capacity and competence to consent. According to Smith, in Schumacher and McMillan (1993), informed consent is viewed as a dialogue, where each participant in the study is informed of the purpose of the research and assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Participation in this study was done purely on a voluntary basis.

According to Schumacher and McMillan (1993), researchers have a dual responsibility: the protection of participants' confidences from other persons in the setting, whose private information might enable them to identify them and the protection of the informants from the general reading public.

In my study, all three participants were made aware of the purpose of the study. In addition, they were made familiar with the data collection procedures. This involved me informing them of the tools and instruments to be used in the collection of data. Their role, as participants in the research process, was also made explicit to them. The participants were also requested to express their concerns and raise any questions that may have emerge in the research process. Further, I assured them of confidentiality and anonymity in the data collection process, as well as in the reporting of the research.

To put participants at ease, I assured them that my research would not infringe on their instruction time and that as far as possible, not in any way, hamper the practices that normally occur within their classroom contexts. The participants were also encouraged to make me aware if they were uncomfortable with any request made on them during the data collection process. Subjects were also reminded that their participation in the research was purely voluntary and should they wish to withdraw from the study at any time, their decision would be respected.

1.9. The Issues of “Voice” and “Signature”

1.9.1 The Dominant Voice in this Study

According to Clandinin and Connelly, in Lankshear and Knobel (2004), “voice” in its broadest sense, may be thought of as belonging to participants, researcher and other participants and researchers for whom a text speaks. Furthermore; they added that one of the challenges with which the researcher is constantly faced is trying to maintain one’s balance as one struggles to express one’s own voice amidst an inquiry designed to tell the participants’ storied experiences and to represent their voices, all whilst trying to create a research that will speak to and reflect upon the audiences’ voices.

The multiplicity of voices, both for the participants and for the researcher, need to be borne in mind. As a researcher, one needs to consider the voices heard and those not heard. Research could be reported in a way that silences or obscures the participant’s voice.

One also tends to experience great difficulty in bringing out his or her multiple voices in the text. The silences that the researcher chooses and those of which he or she may be unaware also need to be at the back of one’s mind when reporting research.

In this study, I had to constantly and critically assess my own understanding of key concepts and ideas associated with HIV/AIDS. The meaning I attached to these concepts definitely impacted on the significance I attached to the events that transpired in the course of this study.

My interpretations of the educators' notions of these concepts were influenced by my own knowledge base, awareness, training and engagement with documents related to the topic, on both a personal and professional level. The fact that I had received training on HIV/AIDS education and that I had read extensively in and around the area of study, impacted on the extent to which I was critical of the participants and the way in which they engaged in discussion and dialogue on HIV/AIDS. This also made it possible for me to attach multiple meanings to the participants' responses during the data collection process.

My own predispositions, preferences, biases, conceptual frameworks and, acknowledging all of these, certainly impacted on the manner in which I reported this research, obviously attaching priority to certain meanings and interpretations and marginalizing or silencing others. This relates to the idea of "signature". Coming from a purely science background, my own engagement with terms and concepts related to the HIV/AIDS education and the manner in which I engaged with learners on these, were particularly scientific. My understanding of these terms and concepts and the meanings I assigned to these were significantly influenced by my preference for the Sciences, and by my involvement in the teaching of the Natural Science learning area.

Although I was also involved in the teaching of English and Economic Management Sciences, the influence of these on the manner in which I construed these terms and concepts were minimal. My experience in teaching English for the past seven years, did however manage to sensitize me to the possibility of there being various interpretations and meanings attached to whatever was being conveyed within the classroom context. The notion of multiple meanings and the possibility of the emergence of misconceptions arising as a result of the teacher's own understanding of concepts and terms related to the area of study, did however, seem to make sense to me.

Being in my twenties, single and having no children also impacted on the manner in which I engaged with learners in discussion on issues pertaining to HIV/AIDS. Having received training at tertiary level on how to handle sensitive and controversial topics in education with learners, I was in a position than some of the participants in the study to meaningfully engage with learners on the issues of sex and sexuality, despite coming from a conservative, traditional Hindu background myself. Evidence of the comfortable levels with which I engaged in dialogue and discussion on HIV/AIDS with my learners, came across clearly in the presentation of my Natural Science lessons.

1.9.2 Signature and Its Influence on This Study

Signature is the special way in which the researcher reports what he or she wants to say. It relates to the mark that he or she puts on the style of his or her writing and reporting of the research. In gaining a voice and signature, the researcher puts his or her own stamp on the work and by doing so, creates an identity for him or herself. Clandinin and Connelly, in Lankshear and Knobel (2004), caution against the use of extremely vivid or too subtle signatures. The former runs the risk of obscuring the field and its participants. The latter runs the risk of deception that the research text speaks from the point of view of the participant.

My stance is admitting that my own signature does permeate throughout the reporting of this research project. The lens, or gaze through which I processed, interpreted, analyzed and reported the data reflects, to an extent, my own personal prejudices and preferences, as both an educator and a researcher. Although attempts to minimize the effects of my own personal biases, (as outlined in the methodology section of this dissertation) have been taken, there is no denying that these have influenced the reporting of this research.

1.10 The Issue of Context and Contextual Factors in This Study

According to Lankshear and Knobel (2004), context includes notions, such as temporal context, spatial context and context of other people. Context is important for making sense of any person, event or thing. In a case study design, the importance of providing a context to the study cannot be emphasized enough. The contextual factors in this study receive due attention in the data analysis section of this dissertation. A detailed description of each of these is provided along with its' implications for this study.

1.11 Concluding Remarks

To reiterate the sentiments expressed in this chapter, the purpose of this study is to illuminate the issues that need conceptualizing and further research in respect of teaching and learning about HIV/AIDS within the context of schools. This is to be achieved via a case-study design within the qualitative mode of inquiry. The objectives and critical questions that guide the study, along with the rationale for embarking on the research project, were highlighted. The tools and instruments to be used, as per the methodology section, were also briefly outlined. A concise description of the research site and of the participants in the study was also offered. Issues pertaining to ethical considerations, voice, signature and context that permeate much of the study, concluded the discussion in this chapter.

The next chapter focuses on a review of literature that looks at current lines of thinking and trends in research about HIV/AIDS education. In addition, the literature that looks at the role of language in facilitating meaning and creating understanding, receives attention. The literature which highlights the framework, within which this study is conceptualized (Critical Discourse Analysis) concludes the discussion

CHAPTER: 2- LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the literature related to the area of study is discussed in terms of its' implications for this particular research project. The chapter begins with highlighting the purpose of undertaking a literature review in a study. A distinction is drawn between two recurrent terms explored throughout this study, namely language and discourse. The literature that is reviewed in this chapter follows a thematic based approach. Common themes and issues that emerged, as a result of conducting the literature study, are critiqued in terms of their applicability to this study.

The second half of this chapter is dedicated to a discussion on the critical framework that informed this study, that being the critical discourse analysis (CDA) mode of inquiry. A brief history and explanation of what is meant by CDA, introduces this section of chapter two. The basic tenets and implications of CDA for this study are also explored. The concluding remarks on how CDA was used in this study, offers useful insights in terms of creating a backdrop against which this study was conceptualized.

2.2 The Purpose of the Literature Review

Cooper (1988) believes that one of the purposes of a literature review, is to describe summarize, evaluate, clarify and/or integrate the content of primary reports. He asserts that a literature review uses as its database reports of primary or original scholarship and does not report new primary scholarship itself. The types of scholarship may be theoretical, empirical, critical or analytical, or methodological in nature.

Leedy (1989) believes that the function of a literature review is to look again at the literature in an area, not necessarily identical with but collateral to your own area of study. It is aimed at obtaining a detailed knowledge of the topic being studied. The intention of writing a review is to demonstrate a professional grasp, of the background theory, to the research that is going to be undertaken.

2.3 An Exploration of the Literature Reviewed in this Study

In this study, the literature review begins with the role that language plays in creating meaning and understanding. The role of language in the production of knowledge is also highlighted. An elaboration of the terms “discourse” and “language” is provided in light of this research. The various ways in which HIV/AIDS has been defined and represented merits attention next.

The role of the media and culture in defining HIV/AIDS is also discussed. A discussion on the employment of metaphors within the discourse on HIV/AIDS, as a means of influencing the nature of discussion surrounding the various controversial topics that permeate through much of the discussion on the topic, is presented next. This is presented in line with the possibility of the terms and concepts within the discourse on HIV/AIDS, being open to multiple interpretations. The issue of creating a “shared understanding” within a multicultural context is also explored. The influence of contextual factors on the meaning- making process, and on facilitating understanding within the context of HIV/AIDS education, is also given prominence in the literature review.

Current chains of thought relating to HIV/AIDS intervention initiatives are presented throughout this section of the literature review, with a view to illuminating the gaps that may be present in the current initiatives. The implications of these various research findings for this study are highlighted. The pivotal role that education has to play in promoting HIV/AIDS awareness is emphasized along with a presentation of the important tenets of the various policies and material resources pertaining to HIV/AIDS education within the school context.

Research conducted at school level where HIV/AIDS education is being taught and the issues that emerged as a result of these studies, are also presented in the literature review, as are the implications of these studies for my research. Current trends in HIV/ AIDS education, both nationally and internationally, are cited with regard to the implications that these may carry for this study. A detailed discussion of each of these themes and issues provides the framework within which this research was conducted.

Since my study involves the extensive use of the terms “language” and “discourse”, it would seem logical to start with defining these two terms and highlighting their significance in this study. This is the area to which I now draw attention.

2.4 Defining Language and its Role in Facilitating Meaning, Understanding and Knowledge Production

Wragg (1999) contends that most of our day-to-day living is dependant on skills related to talking and making sense of the talk of others, as we engage in our normal everyday tasks. The mere uttering of sounds related to objects, actions or ideas, is only part of the process of making sense of the world we live in. The manner in which we select and organize our utterances according to our perception of what is right and appropriate, in a particular setting, is influenced partly by grammar, social etiquette and culture. More importantly, it is influenced by the assumption that others will perceive the same situation as we do.

The above discussion highlights the fact that the way people conceptualize and perceive ideas and situations, is influenced by a multitude of factors. A consideration of the following questions will be pertinent to my study in this regard: *“What are some of the factors that influence the way educators conceptualize and make meaning of the terms associated with HIV/AIDS? How does this influence the way educators communicate about HIV/AIDS within the context of HIV/AIDS education?”*

It is chiefly through language that ideas are communicated and knowledge disseminated. Since my study frequently involves the use of the terms “language” and “discourse,” it would seem logical to start with defining these two terms.

According to Schostak (1993), language is more than a total set of all words but comprises also of the rules, conventions, and codes through which those words may be combined to form meaningful units, such as phrases and sentences. Language is learnt socially and it is through language that objects are distinguished from one another. It is through language that world views and a sense of 'self' are constructed.

Vygotsky, in Mercer (1995) sees language as a "psychological tool" that one uses to make sense of experience. He (Vygotsky, in Mercer; 1995) also views language as a "cultural tool" which people use to share experience and to collectively, make sense of it. In short, language is a social mode of thinking for the development of knowledge and understanding. The accumulated language, the specialized vocabulary and other conventions of any particular society, need to be taken into account to provide a deep analysis of how people access information to facilitate understanding.

Mercer (1995) believes that language is one of the many symbols which are a necessary and convenient means of communication of our current state of knowing. In addition, language is only one "symbolic medium" for 'knowing'. He (Mercer, 1995) adds that knowledge can also be expressed in images, actions, gestures and in verbal language. This has enormous implications for my study as the non-verbal language used by teachers to engage in discussion and dialogue on HIV/AIDS within the classroom context, will also be explored, to the extent that it influences the meaning-making process among learners.

Donaldson, in Mercer (1995) believes that one must have some grasp of a concept before one can begin to use appropriate linguistic forms, but the use of these linguistic forms can further ones understanding of the concept. The implications of this assertion for my study, necessitates an exploration of how terms and concepts pertaining to HIV/AIDS are conceptualized by educators. *“Is the teachers’ understanding of these terms and concepts translated into language that is accessible and meaningful to the learners’ experiences? How do the linguistic forms utilized by the educators, influence the meaning-making process among learners within the context of HIV/AIDS?”*

2.5 Defining Discourse as it is Used in this Study

“Discourse is language as it is used to carry out the social and intellectual life of a community” (Richards; 2002: 67)

Richards (2002) contends that discourse is produced around every kind of social activity. Hence, it follows that discourse is socially and historically produced.

Richards (2002) goes on to add that discourses are generated by the language practices of a group of people with shared interests. Discourse can manifest itself in speech or in writing.

Discourse in this study relates to the discussion and dialogue about HIV/AIDS within the classroom context. More specifically, this study explores the language that is used by teachers within the context of HIV/AIDS education to promote understanding among the learners. The social setting would be the school, in particular the classroom. The ideologies and assumptions that operate within the school context and the possible relation that these may bear, to how educators conceptualize and communicate about HIV/AIDS, will form part of the analysis of the data obtained in this research.

The possibility of the existence of competing discourses operating within the context of HIV/AIDS will also be examined, for example, medical discourses on HIV/AIDS, or discourses about HIV/AIDS that are embedded in Western culture. The influence that these discourses have on how educators communicate about HIV/AIDS within the classroom context will also be explored. *“Which are the dominant discourses in HIV/AIDS education? How do these discourses manifest themselves within the classroom context? How do these discourses influence discussion and dialogue within the context of HIV/AIDS education? How do these discourses impact on the processes of creating meaning and facilitating understanding among learners?”*

The notion of “*forbidden discourse*” is significant to this study as it encompasses discussion an issues pertaining to sex. Foucault, in Schostak (1993) made specific reference to “*forbidden discourse*”, as referring to a specialized use of language that is historically and culturally produced. Political and sexual discourses fall within the realm of “*forbidden discourses*”. The role that context and culture play in the way teachers define and represent HIV/AIDS, will be examined. This will be done in relation to the language that educators use to facilitate meaning and understanding among learners.

Schostak (1993) adds that myths, narratives and stories, are components that are essential to discourse practices. It is through discourse practices that selves are produced and a world made known. In short, discourses are indispensable in the production of knowledge and in the process of making meaning. It is for these reasons that the various discourses on HIV/AIDS, that manifest themselves in the classroom context, be explored and analyzed in relation to their influence on the meaning making process among learners.

2.6 The Issue of Context in the Meaning-making Process

Donaldson, in Mercer (1995) speaks of “de-contextualized” or “disembedded” language, which is the language in which reasoning is made visible and in which knowledge is made accountable in accord with the ‘ground rules’ of the relevant discourse community. The social and cultural relationships involved in the teaching and learning process need to be examined in order to understand fully, how these influence the manner in which language is employed to convey meaning and understanding. The exploration of such relationships, receive attention in this study.

The power relationships that exist within the school context will also be examined. The social and personal identities of teachers and learners cannot be seen as separate from the learning process. These manifest themselves in the classroom context through the way in which they interact with one-another in an attempt to express and maintain such identities, as well as redefine them.

Mercer (1995) believes that a great deal of education is learning how to use language to represent ideas, to interpret experiences, to formulate problems and to solve them. Through conversations with parents, teachers and others, people acquire ways of using language to shape their thoughts. These ways of using language provide us with frames of reference which we can use to “re-contextualize” our experiences and interpret observations, information and events. In this regard Gibbons (1998) asserts that knowledge is produced and disseminated in the context of application. The extent to which contextual factors influence the discussion and dialogue within HIV/AIDS education, needs to be given due consideration in this study.

A distinction that can be drawn, between the terms “context-embedded” and “context reduced” communication, is pertinent to the processes of creating meaning and facilitating understanding among individuals. The former, according to Baker, in Walsh (1996), implies a situation where learners can actively negotiate meaning and where language is supported by a variety of paralinguistic or situational cues, such as body language.

In the case of the latter, Baker, in Walsh (1996) asserts that there are few cues to convey meaning. Context – reduced communication relies primarily on linguistic cues to convey meaning and may even include, suspending knowledge in the real world in order to manipulate the logic of the message. This includes a cognitive demanding situation where information is processed quickly and without situational cues.

The implications of the above discussion for this study are enormous. Firstly, the influence of the power relations present within the classroom setting, on the dominant discourse within the context of HIV/AIDS, needs to be explored in detail. Secondly, the extent to which the dominant ideology present within that classroom setting, manifests itself in teaching approaches and learning activities, needs to be looked at. Lastly, the extent to which the language competencies of the teacher are congruent with those of the learners and the ability of the teacher to incorporate the learners own life-experiences into the lessons to facilitate understanding and create meaning among learners, are significant areas of foci in this study. The influence and use of paralinguistic and situational cues, as they manifest themselves in body language and other forms of non-verbal communication, for example, need to also be examined.

2.7 The Possibility of Creating a “Shared Understanding” within a Multicultural Context

Vermeulen, in Mercer (1995) believes that all utterances, representations and texts are grounded in a field of cultural codes. In addition, Gibbons, in Walsh (1996) adds that most cultural codes imply value judgments which may be implicitly or explicitly evident. From this perspective, the pivotal role of culture in the meaning-making process needs to be acknowledged. This is of particular reference to HIV/AIDS education where a variety of terms are used to convey meaning and understanding.

According to Brown (1990), teachers are caught in a “web of ideas” where the language they use to convey meaning is not one language but many and where each dialect or register has its own habits, patterns and values, deriving from its local culture. Further, she adds that the culture in which we live is not one culture but many, each with its own values, customs, and so on, and each should be given equal status and recognition. Other peoples’ views, traditions, feelings and cultures are as valid and valuable as our own. This has enormous implications for my study. *“What are some of the assumptions that educators hold about the learners’ cultural background and experiences? How do these assumptions influence discussion and dialogue within the context of HIV/AIDS education?”* The following sentiments emphasize the significance of examining one’s own pre-dispositions and assumptions:

“The world’s largest data bank of examples is dwarfed by the collection we all carry around subconsciously in our heads.” (Aitchison; 1987:13)

This quotation highlights the limitations of the assumptions that individuals carry around with them. In this study, the critical analysis of the assumptions that teachers hold about the learners' cultural backgrounds and experiences, will be analyzed. The influence of these assumptions on the discussion and dialogue surrounding HIV/AIDS within the classroom context will also be explored. Due attention will also be given to the influence of the teachers' assumptions on the way they use language to represent terms and concepts associated with HIV/AIDS.

Does the language used by the teacher reflect cultural bias? Do the teachers create a learning environment that acknowledges and caters for the diverse range of cultures that may be present within a single classroom setting? These issues will be explored in the study, in light of their relation to creating meaning and facilitating understanding among learners within the context of HIV/AIDS education.

A consideration of the role of culture in the process of making meaning, as discussed above, raises the question of whether a "shared understanding" of the terms and concepts associated with HIV/AIDS being possible within a multicultural context. The notion of a "shared knowledge and understanding" is more than simply pooling together information. Knowledge and understanding can only emerge, as a result of working with information, selecting from it, organizing it, and arguing for its relevance.

People use language to justify their opinions and the information they provide. Frequently, the purpose of this exercise entails asserting their own agendas and representing their own interests. Hence, it follows that factors such as, cultural influences and values, need to be examined in this regard. These tend to exert a pervasive influence on the manner in which one expresses his or her ideas and thoughts, as discussed above.

2.8. Defining and Representing HIV/AIDS

AIDS can be defined as:

“an epidemic of signification, a complex web of meaning, stories, and discourses that intersect and overlap, reinforce, and subvert one another, which result in blame and accusation towards those infected with the Human Immune-Deficiency Virus”
(Treichler; 1988:31).

Treichler (1988) goes on to add that AIDS, as a “*nexus of multiple meaning*”, is in a crisis of identity. This has enormous implications for the way in which educators engage in dialogue about HIV/AIDS. If we cease the opportunity to separate true representations of AIDS from false ones as opposed to focusing on the process and consequence of representation and discursive production, we can begin to examine how particular versions of truth are produced and sustained. This will also help to begin to explore the cultural forces present in given contexts.

A typical case of a situation where AIDS can be construed as being ill-defined is evident in a recent article entitled, “*HIV truths lost in statistics*” (The Mercury; 9 June 2005: 2), where the underreporting and misclassification of at least twelve potential opportune infections in the official South African death statistics were reflected as not portraying a true picture. The question of what constitutes natural deaths was raised, as was the issue of it (natural deaths) being presently “ill-defined”.

Such an approach highlights the construction of AIDS as a complex narrative. This raises questions about power and representation. In an attempt to understand how AIDS became articulated within particular cultural contexts, it becomes necessary to identify the underlying rules and conventions that determine whether a particular account is received as true or false, by whom and with what material consequence. In short, discourses need to be contextualized as the following sentiment expressed:

“The gradual objectification and decontextualisation of discourse from its immediate situation of utterance, exercises power by extracting, appropriating and reporting, the speech of other, detaching it from whatever meaning prevailed at the time of its original utterance and redefining it in a new context” (Kupiers; 1989:109)

In this regard, discourse analysis plays a crucial role in unpacking the complexities associated with the utterance of AIDS on what meaning unfolds. Hence AIDS cannot be constructed as a neutral concept that has one meaning.

2.9. The Role of Culture and the Media in Defining Sexual Behaviour

De Zaluondo (1991) highlights the shortcomings of using western culture to define African sexual behaviour. This has created discourses of “*evil sirens*” and “*reservoirs of HIV infection*”, which resulted in physical assault, harassment and even incarceration in countries like, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. Inappropriate use of terms like “*promiscuity*” and “*prostitution*” to define African sexual behaviour, poses a problem since these impose western ideologies and morals which are not necessarily shared across cultures. According to Crawford (1994), terms such as “*dirty*”, “*disease-ridden*” and “*sexually promiscuous*” are components of the negative symbolism used to describe AIDS in Africa today.

The production of meaning and understanding of AIDS is not exclusively limited to biomedical experts. The diverse levels of expertise and knowledge engaged in the production of AIDS discourse include politicians, government agencies, educators, people with HIV, as well as mainstream and alternative media. This introduces the idea of multiple meanings being associated with particular terms in the HIV discourse, depending on whose interpretations are being voiced, for example,

“The media acts like a filter to translate scientific information, construct public images of scientific certainty and uncertainty, shape the way in which people understand the ‘sides’ and ‘boundaries’ of a debate, certify scientific and medical celebrities, affect perception of risk, and reinforce popular stereotypes of scientist and doctors as both, heroes and villains” (Epstein; 1996: 22).

To an extent this serves the purpose of expanding on the multiplicity of meanings generated and used in the discourses around HIV/AIDS, giving the impression of a “dirty disease” being the mainstream discourse filtering and in its process, trivializing the importance of culture, medicine, education, etc. The implications of these multiple meanings within the HIV/AIDS discourse, has enormous implications for teachers.

“Which meaning does the teacher hold as being accurate and why does this interpretation take precedence over another? To what extent does ideology influence the meaning making process? What are the dominant ideologies surrounding discourse on HIV/AIDS? How does this manifest itself through the language used by the educator to facilitate understanding among learners within the classroom context?” These are some of the pertinent issues that will be addressed in this study.

According to Nikerk, in Naran (2005), research conducted in Folweni, Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa, showed that more than half of the visits to adult porn sites on the internet were by children aged eleven to seventeen years of age. This is distressing when one takes into consideration the fact that most adult pornography depicts transient sexual relationships, often with multiple partners. A predominantly male view of female sexuality is also typically depicted. Concern has also been expressed over the easy access that children have to cellular phones. The exchange of sexually explicit messages and pictures through cellular phones leave children particularly vulnerable to imitating such act. *“Special Assignment”* (an investigative, journalism programme on SABC 3; 30 August 2005) featured an expose on this practice among South African youth. Interviews conducted, during this feature, highlighted this escalating problem and its contribution to cavalier sexual relations among adolescents.

If this instrumental role of the media is acknowledged, it becomes imperative that its influence on the way attitudes are shaped not be ignored. Seidel (1993) identifies the multiplicity of actors involved in constructing the discourse on AIDS in Africa. He argues that the competing discourses on HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa fall into two categories, namely, those of “*control and exclusion*” or those of “*rights and empowerment*”. The former has negative connotations attached to it, where AIDS is perceived as God’s punishment and something that reflects moral disorder. The latter are characterized by legal and ethical discussions surrounding the preservation of civil liberties and human rights of people with AIDS.

Schiller (1992) argues that stigmatizing discourses and counter-discourses are ideological terrains used to insulate the perceived “uninfected other” from “the afflicted”. These can be misleading as they fail to recognize the diversity of sexual culture within seemingly, homogenous sub-groups.

Pliskin (1997) believes that cultural difficulties surrounding the discourse about sexual health, act as impediments to change in sexual behaviour. He believes that in order to bring about a change in behaviour, we must understand what kinds of individual behaviours people place at risk for disease and how such behaviour is socially and culturally influenced. Knowledge about HIV/AIDS as KAP (knowledge, action, practice) surveys have shown, do not necessarily motivate people to change their sexual behaviour to include safer sexual practices.

2.10. The Usage of Metaphors in Communication about HIV/AIDS

Typically communication about HIV/AIDS is done symbolically and indirectly by talking around the topic. One of the reasons for this, according to Pliskin (1997), is that there is a lack of language with which to discuss sexually transmitted diseases. Prevention programmes need to develop a cultural language to break down our own taboos concerning discussion of sexually transmitted diseases.

In addition, the every day use of language by people includes the use of metaphors. To some extent, these metaphors influence the way people understand the world. This has been documented and explained by Lakoff, in Seidel (1993). Examples of metaphors, such as "*love is a journey*", enable us to understand all sorts of complexities about love, which may otherwise, remain an abstract concept that is difficult to understand. Such metaphors may be used, primarily in literature.

However, there are more complex, pervasive metaphors which are infused into our everyday understanding. Put together, these result in "systems" of metaphorical use which influence, not just our understanding of single concepts, but also relationships between different concepts.

Research in South Africa reveals that the country's AIDS awareness messages are too vague, leading to youth being misinformed about certain unsafe sexual practices.

Macleod (The Sunday Tribune; 20 June 2004: 7), in an article entitled "*Youth get the wrong message on AIDS*", highlighted the research findings of a survey conducted by the Nelson Mandela/HSRC in 2003. This study revealed that of the 2 500 participants aged between 15 -24, half of them had not answered questions pertaining to unsafe sexual practices. Of the half that did respond, 3.4% indicated, that they had engaged in unsafe sexual practices.

2.11. The Translation of Knowledge into Action

In the same article (MacLeod; Sunday Tribune, 20 June 2004: 7), another study conducted by Love-life at four urban and rural high schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal and published in April 2004, revealed that nearly seventy percent of the 12 000 respondents between 15-24, had engaged in sexual relations. Among those who were sexually experienced, abstaining from sex in the past twelve months was not associated with an active choice to avoid HIV but rather due to lack of opportunities to have sex.

Professor Karim, in Ntshingila (2004), believes that educators and those involved in conducting programmes on HIV/AIDS awareness and education, need to ensure that prevention messages are as complete as possible, especially with regard to the different ways in which one can get HIV/AIDS. This has enormous implications for education, especially with regard to establishing whether there is a link between knowledge and behavior.

According to MacLeod (2004), knowledge and attitudes that are conducive to safe sexual practices do not necessarily mean that teenagers will engage in adequate preventative behaviour. Sexual education is a relatively new phenomenon in South Africa. Evaluations of these programmes yield mixed results. In some cases, there appears to be an improvement in teenagers' knowledge and attitudes and in other cases, there does not.

A study conducted and supported by the Gauteng Departments of Health, Welfare and Education in 1999, as documented in Chilom, et al (2003), where twenty six low-income communities participated in reflective exercises and where one of the objectives was to better understand local levels of understandings or discourse of the problem of HIV/AIDS, revealed that HIV/AIDS exists in a climate of fear, created partially by incomplete and de-contextualized information. In addition, this anxiety gives rise to and promotes a variety of myths and misconceptions about HIV/AIDS and coping mechanisms include dismissing the disease or refining the 'roles' which govern it.

2.12. The Role of the Education in Promoting HIV/AIDS Awareness

At the International AIDS Conference in Durban 2000, the “Prevention Works” Symposium recommended that HIV/AIDS education begin early, focusing on children as young as five years old.

Boler (2003) suggests that a number of social factors influence young people’s perceptions about HIV, including religious influence, the media, family and peers. In her research, the purpose being to investigate how HIV/AIDS education is implemented and received by schools in India and Kenya, she found that parents often feel uncomfortable when talking about sensitive issues with their children. In addition, the media is perceived as giving out harmful messages. The school is seen by the community, as a trusted and important place for young people to learn about HIV/AIDS. In the same study, sixty three percent of the Indian parents reported never talking to their children about sex or HIV/AIDS.

According to UNAIDS (2001), researchers have identified key elements that should constitute any successful HIV/AIDS education program. These ideas are based largely on studies conducted in the United States since more evaluation of such programmes in developing countries is lacking and actively sought after.

These include among others:

- the transmission of a clear message about sexual activity and condom use and continuously reinforcing this message,*
- using a variety of teaching methods that require assistance for the participants to personalize the information,*
- providing accurate basic information about the risks of adolescent sexual activity and about methods of avoiding intercourse or using condoms to provide protection against HIV infection and,*
- providing experiences for modeling and practice of communication, negotiation, and refusal skills.*

In its outline of norms and standards for educators (Department of Education, 2000), seven essential roles of educators are pointed out. Of particular significance to my area of research, are the roles of ‘community facilitator’ and ‘pastoral care giver’. As documented in the Government Gazette, 415(4) February 2000, this task would include being able to respond to current social and educational problems with particular emphasis on the issues of violence, drug abuse, poverty, child and women abuse, HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation.

The National Policy on HIV/AIDS for Learners and Educators in Public Schools, and Students and Educators in Further Education and Training Institutions (1999), makes provisions for pertinent issues that relate to the non-discrimination of learners, students and educators with HIV/AIDS, protection of confidentiality, a safe school environment and HIV/AIDS education at all levels.

In a paper for the 'Education for All' (EFA) conference, held in Dakar in 2000, Carol Coombe raised the following issues:

"The gains of EFA are being undone by the AIDS pandemic. Nevertheless, most countries do not factor the influence of AIDS into education planning. What must we do to understand how to live with AIDS, as individuals, communities, and civil societies? How can we mitigate the pandemic's consequences? Does education's planning and management paradigm need to change?" (Coombe, in Chisholm, et al; 2003: 124)

Coombe, in Chisholm, et al (2003) suggests that education ministers need to focus on service delivery. Among others, one way to achieve this is to identify at-risk student populations and to target these groups with the necessary intervention initiatives.

According to the South African Institute of Race Relations (2000), the school system has to contend with adolescent sexuality, with the highest rate of infection occurring among the 14-24 year old age group generally.

The Department of Education's Implementation Plan for Tirisano (2000-2004), prioritises HIV/AIDS in three of its projects. Aspects relevant to this study include:

- Awareness, information and advocacy;*
- HIV/AIDS within the curriculum and*
- HIV/AIDS and the education system.*

This plan sets out to deal urgently and purposefully, with HIV/AIDS through educational training. This is to be achieved via the integration of Life Skills and HIV/AIDS education into the curriculum. A significant outcome of this plan is to ensure adequate access to proper information by educators and learners.

The Emergency Guidelines on HIV/AIDS for Educators (1999) makes provisions for this. These guidelines highlights the role of educators in curbing HIV/AIDS and includes among others, basic information about transmission, treatment, key messages about preventing HIV, issues pertaining to Sexuality Education, universal precautions, managing incidents and accidents on the sports-field and at school, stigmatization, discrimination and guidelines for developing a school policy on HIV/AIDS.

The National Policy on HIV/AIDS (1999) stipulates that a continuing HIV/AIDS education programme should be implemented at all schools for all learners, educators and other staff. In addition, age-appropriate education on HIV/AIDS should form part of the compulsory curriculum for all learners and should be integrated in the life-skills education programme for pre-primary, primary and secondary school learners. This programme should be ongoing and its' content should not be presented in isolation but should be integrated in the whole curriculum.

The goal of HIV/AIDS education is to promote behaviour that prevents the transmission of HIV/AIDS (Department of Education, 1999). The National Policy on HIV/AIDS (1999) advocates that information on HIV/AIDS, be given in an accurate and scientific manner, and in language and terms that are understandable to the learners. According to Schostak (1993), the language employed within the context of HIV/AIDS education tends to be judgmental in nature and the manner in which sexuality is presented is not always positive. It is for these reasons that it becomes imperative that we examine the language employed by teachers in the execution of HIV/AIDS education initiatives.

Learning the behavioural skills necessary for prevention, forms the major content of this curriculum. Boler (2003) asserts that teaching learners about HIV/AIDS requires a frank and explicit discussion of sexuality, modes of transmission and methods of protection. In light of the above discussion, one may raise the following questions:

“Are educators equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge necessary to communicate openly and comfortably about the many controversial issues surrounding the discourses on HIV/AIDS? How has educators’ levels of training and engagement with policies and related materials on HIV/AIDS, informed their understanding of the terms and concepts commonly associated with HIV/AIDS? How are the interpretations of these terms and concepts influenced by the teachers’ own cultural beliefs and ideologies? What assumptions are made about the learners’ cultural beliefs, existing knowledge and experiences? How has this translated into practice through the learning activities that teachers employ within the classroom context? What styles of teaching do teachers use to enhance the understanding of learners about these terms and concepts? Do these teaching approaches support the intended outcomes of HIV/AIDS education?” These are some of the issues that will be explored in this study.

2.13. A Review of Studies on HIV/AIDS Education Conducted at Schools in

Kwa- Zulu Natal

In light of the research conducted at schools where HIV/AIDS education has been taught, I would like to highlight the basic findings of two studies. Both studies were conducted at co-educational secondary schools in Kwa – Zulu Natal. These are the studies conducted by Reddy (2003) and Nasaree (2005). The emerging issues that arise out of these studies and their implications for this research will also be discussed.

Reddy (2003) in her research on “*Young Adults’ Sexual Identity Constructions within the Context of HIV/AIDS*”, revealed some valuable insights which are pertinent to this study. One of the significant conclusions drawn from this study was that sexual identity and sexuality are both shaped by social and cultural factors. In addition, individuals actively reconstruct their sexual identities over time and in different contexts, dependent partly on their experiences. Hence it follows that biological, social and cultural conceptions of sexual relations need to be considered in light of their influence on the understanding and behaviour of the individual. In this regard, Reddy (2003) asserted that people make sense of the biological through discursive practices which are deeply embedded in their culture.

These discursive constructions include the discourses of the adult world and the peer world, which are often in conflict with one another. “*The issue of which discourse takes precedence of the other and why this is the case immediately comes to mind*”. This is an area which will be explored in my study.

Reddy (2003) also found that issues pertaining to terms such as “abstinence” and “promiscuity”, revealed the existence of many confusions and contradictions among the learners in her study. She attributed this to the lack of vocabulary in traditional discourses on “sex”. The limited communication between adults and children about issues pertaining to sex was yet another finding of her study. Reddy’s research (2003) revealed that if communication about issues pertaining to sex and sexuality was present, this typically had assumed a top-down approach from the adult to the learner, reflecting one-way communication. This raised the issue of: *“How are teachers being prepared for open dialogue with learners about issues of sexuality within the context of HIV/AIDS?”* This is a significant area of focus in my research.

Nasaree (2005), in her study on *“The Experiences of an HIV Positive Learner in a Secondary School in Kwa-Zulu Natal”*, highlighted the inadequacies of the present school intervention initiatives with regard to HIV/AIDS education. This was evident in her research findings, which revealed that despite learners being aware of the dangers involved in unsafe sexual practices, they persist in experimenting with sex. This is indicative of the message intended to empower learners and to institute positive behaviour changes with regard to sexual practices, failing to meet its intended outcomes.

Nasaree (2005) recommended that the present pedagogy used in HIV/AIDS instruction within the school context, be re-examined. This is in line with Reddy’s (2005) research, which indicated that communication about issues pertaining to sex and sexuality typically assumed a one-way flow of information from adult to child.

Another important finding of the research conducted by Nasaree (2005) was that although learners were aware of the dangers of HIV, they displayed an attitude of denial. This gives rise to a distinct demarcation between HIV infected individuals and those individuals who are not HIV positive, creating an “us and them” mentality. In addition, this mentality perpetuates the belief that HIV is something so far removed from the learners’ own reality and therefore learners are not at risk of contracting HIV.

Nasaree’s study (2005) also highlighted the fact that knowledge awareness among learners, of the possibility of contracting HIV, has little or no significance in practicing safe sexual relations during a moment of passion. In this regard, Nasaree (2005) advocated that more efficient information delivery within the context of HIV/AIDS education is necessary. The intention is to create an impact on learners, thereby promoting positive behaviour change with regard to sexual practices.

The influence of culture on the manner in which people represent HIV/AIDS was also depicted in Nasaree’s Study (2005). The usage of euphemisms such as, “*The Slimming Disease*”, to represent HIV/AIDS, was cited as an example of the myths present within particular cultural contexts. The role of schools and of educators in particular, in disseminating appropriate information and in dispelling the myths that pervade much of the discussion on HIV/AIDS, becomes necessary in effecting positive attitude and behaviour changes among learners.

The presentation of the research findings above, allude to the inadequacies of present HIV/AIDS education initiatives to institute effective changes in attitude and behaviour regarding sexual practices among learners. The role of culture in defining and representing HIV/AIDS was highlighted. The existence of various myths within local communities regarding HIV/AIDS was duly noted, as was the effects of these on adding to the misconceptions and ambiguities that pervade much of the discussion on HIV/AIDS. This necessitates an exploration of what actually transpires in the classroom context with regard to HIV/AIDS education. My study attempts to do this through an analysis of the language used by educators to convey meaning and understanding among learners within the context of HIV/AIDS. The following issues will be explored in the study:

“How do educators conceptualize and represent HIV/AIDS? How does this understanding infiltrate into the classroom and how does it translate into learning activities? How do teachers engage in dialogue and discussion on HIV/AIDS to create meaning and facilitate understanding among learners? What attempts are made by the educators to apply the information presented within the realm of HIV/AIDS education, to the life experiences of the learners? To what extent are the learning activities within the context of HIV/AIDS education adapted to suit the cultural backgrounds and experiences of learners? How are unhelpful cultural practices and taboos addressed in an attempt to dispel the myths that feature within the discourse on HIV/AIDS?”

The framework, within which these issues will be explored and analyzed, is the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). What follows, is a detailed discussion on how this framework was conceptualized, its' basic tenets and how CDA will be used in this study.

2.14 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.14.1 Framework within which the Study can be Located

My study can be located within the critical discourse analysis (CDA) framework. According to Wodak (1997), the concern with the power relations present within society, is a key feature of this framework. CDA seeks to bring about emancipation through the critical examination of the ways in which ideologies position people. A concern with the manner in which these ideologies influence, and shape the practices within a social setting is also an important consideration. In addition, Canning (1994) asserts that the power relations evident in a modern society manifest themselves partially through language and more specifically, through the way in which language is used.

My study attempts to explore the manner in which educators use language to facilitate understanding and meaning among learners within the classroom context. In addition, the power relations present within the classroom context will be examined. The ideologies evident, as they manifest themselves through language structures used in the classroom, will also be analyzed. The dominant ideologies that permeate much of the discourse on HIV/AIDS within the classroom will also be explored and analyzed through the use of two concepts that are commonly associated with CDA, namely “Semiotics” and “Interrogated Response”. Much of the discussion on both of these concepts, have been adopted from Ramathan (2002). Both of these concepts have been extensively researched and developed by Ramathan in his thesis on “*Ways of Knowing*” (2002).

Semiotics, which according to Chandler (undated) involves the study and interpretation of signs, will be used as a way of exploring the educators’ understanding of the terms and concepts that are commonly associated with HIV/AIDS education. The rationale is to provide a deep analysis of the meanings educators attach to these terms and concepts and how these inform and shape their teaching practice.

Interrogated response in this study, relates to analyzing the participant's responses as a way of arriving at new meanings. After having engaged in a thorough document analysis of the various policies and material resources pertaining to HIV/AIDS education within the school context, and having identified the key concepts and terms associated with HIV/AIDS, the interrogated response within CDA will begin to be utilized. The meanings attached to these terms and concepts by participants in the study, will be further developed upon in the pre-observation interview sessions.

The data that will be produced as a result of the participants' responses in the pre-observation interviews will be analyzed and interrogated during the observation of the lessons. The intention is to explore how the translation of the meaning attached to terms and concepts related to HIV/AIDS by the participants, finds its way into classroom practices and how the participants' own understanding of these influence the processes involved in facilitating understanding among learners.

The post-observation interviews will serve to deconstruct or unpack the rationale behind the various events that transpire within the classroom context. This will assist me in reviewing my stance as a researcher as a way of arriving at new meanings. It will also assist in reaffirming that the way I interpret and represent the events that transpire in the classroom, is accurate.

In addition, the extent to which the teachers' ideologies permeate through, and influence the dialogue and discussions on HIV/AIDS which occur within the classroom context, will be explored. The extent to which power relations are evident in the classroom context will also receive attention. *Whose ideology is dominant, and how does this influence the nature of the dialogue and discussion on HIV/AIDS within the classroom context?* These are some of the questions that will be raised and explored in this research. A detailed discussion on the concepts of semiotics and interrogated response follows in Sections 2.14.6 and 2.14.7.4 respectively.

2.14.2 A Brief History of CDA

Even though extensive seminal fieldwork has been conducted by a few researchers (Fairclough: 1989; Fairclough and Wodak: 1997; Janks: 1997; Toolan: 1997), not to mention the range of work done in the Australian continent, as expressed by Kalmer (2000), the field is still considered to be an emerging one.

According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997), CDA can be traced back as having its' roots in Western Marxism tradition where cultural dimensions of societies (emphasizing capitalist social relations) originate and are maintained largely through the transmission of culture. This is not just applicable to the economic base. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) contend that evidence of this can be seen in the works of Althusser, Foucault and Habermas.

CDA involves delving deeper into issues of power that are inherent in the ideology of the ruling class, and how the structures and practices of ordinary life, routinely normalize capitalist social relations. Interrogating the way in which ideologies position people, how knowledge systems give rise to particular social relations and how heritage establishes and maintains particular social relations, lead to a better and more thorough analysis of social structures and social relations. The ultimate goal is to attain emancipation.

Foucault's, in Fairclough and Wodak (1997) work was directed against Marxism and theories of ideology. According to him, discourses are knowledge systems of human sciences that inform the social and governmental "technologies that constitute power in modern society." These manifest themselves in reality partly, by the manner in which language is used and partly, by the way in which the architecture of institutions of society are structured.

The works of Althusser, on the ideological theory and that of Foucault on discourse theory, can be cited as significant standpoints in the works of Pecheux, in Fairclough and Wodak (1997). These can be viewed as a basis for attempting to understand discourse as the place where language and ideology meet. Pecheux emphasizes the ideological ramifications of discursive formations in positioning people within a political context, thereby giving rise to class struggles. Specific words and texts are associated with particular political voices. Consequently, words employed within a particular language, position people either for or against a dominant ideology.

Philosophers such as Habermas in, Fairclough and Wodak (1997), can be linked to the origin of the term ‘critical’. Such philosophers aim to re-examine the philosophical heritage from which the capitalist social relations are established and maintained. The concept of an “ideal speech situation’ was developed by Habermas. According to him, such a situation is a utopian vision of interaction, taking place without any power relations intruding into it. He asserts that rational discourse alleviates distorted communication through critical engagement, while ideological discourse impedes the ideal speech situation from occurring.

Bearing in mind that CDA originates from critical engagement of the “taken-for-granted” social practices, it is the questions pertaining to the interests that relate discourse to relations of power. Janks (1997) asserts that the manner in which discourse is positioned, whose interests are being served by that positioning and the consequences of such a positioning, are some of the issues explored within CDA in an attempt to understand how discourses are implicated in relations of power.

2.14.3. Defining Critical Discourse Analysis

Canning (1994) believes that the critical mode of thinking has undergone a ‘linguistic turn’ in the past few decades. This involves a scrutiny and re-examination of language, as not only describing and interpreting the world, but as constituting social practices and identity. The stress on the rules and standards applied in describing and interpreting the world and ourselves, as participants in the world, is sometimes called ‘discursive practice’ or ‘social epistemology’. The focus is on how language is a system of ideas that emerges and forms part of the institutional world we live in. The linguistic turn focuses on the manner in which concepts change rather than the actors who perform in the world. The purpose of giving attention to changing concepts is to place emphasis on the problem of power in contemporary societies.

Wodak (1989) contends that the use of “diverse theoretical and methodological concepts” can be used as tools for “analyzing issues of social relevance,” while attempting to expose “inequality and injustice.” She defines her field, which she calls “Critical Linguistics,” as:

“an interdisciplinary approach language study, with a critical point of view for the purpose of studying language behaviour, in natural speech situations of social relevance.” (Wodak; 1989:16)

2.14.4. Features of Critical Discourse Analysis

2.14.4.1 The Political Agenda of CDA and the Production of Texts

Kress (1990) believes that CDA has an “overtly political agenda” and aims to provide accounts of the production, internal structure and overall organization of texts. CDA adopts a critical stance in its theoretical and descriptive accounts of texts. . Language is treated as a type of social practice among many, used for representation and signification (including visual images, music, and gestures, just to mention but a few).

Texts are produced by “socially situated speakers and writers.” Kress (1990) states, that in the production of texts, the ideologies of participants may not always be equally represented. There will be a range from complete solidarity to complete inequality. Meanings arise as a result of interaction between readers and receivers. Linguistic features come about as a result of social processes which are never arbitrary. Language users bring with them different dispositions towards language in their various interactions. These dispositions are closely connected to social positions.

My study will attempts to explore how teachers position themselves in relation to their knowledge about HIV/ AIDS, and how this manifests itself, in the language they use to engage in discussion and dialogue on HIV/AIDS.

2.14.4.2. The Role of Ideology in CDA

Ideology has a significant role to play in CDA. Van Dijk (1990) sees ideologies as “interpretative frameworks” which “organize sets of attitudes” about other elements of society. Ideologies provide the “cognitive foundation” for the attitudes of various groups in societies, as well as the furtherance of their own goals and interests.

Mercer (1995) sees ideologies as “belief systems” which implicitly invoke cultural, political and moral values.

In this regard, Kress (1990) asserts that language can never appear by itself. It always appears as representative of a system of linguistic terms which themselves, realize discursive and ideological systems. He believes that the defined and delimited sets of statements that comprise a discourse are indicative of, and organized by, a specific ideology. Further he asserts that whilst the selection of a linguistic form may not be an active process for the individual speaker, the discourse used will be a reproduction of that previously learned discourse.

According to Kaplan (1990), advocates of CDA view texts as “selected and organized forms whose ‘content-structure’ reflect the organization of a particular area of social life. In addition, the basics of a text consist of syntax and lexicon (grammar, morphology, phonology, and semantics). Understanding and making meaning of a text not only depends on an analysis of these language structures, but also on the world view that the author and receptor bring to the text.

“The comprehension of meaning lies not in the text itself, but in the complex interaction between the author’s intent and his or her performative ability to encode that intent and the receptor’s intent and his or her performative ability, not only to decode the author’s intent, but to mesh his or her own intent with the author’s”
(Kaplan; 1990:12)

The focus on the way power is deployed is such that it acknowledges that when we “use” language, it may not be us speaking. The way individuals speak is ordered through principles of classification that are socially formed through a variety of practices. Hence it follows that when teachers talk about pertinent issues in education, the terms they use are not merely words of the teacher, but are part of historically constructed ways of reasoning that guide and classify how we view, think, talk and act as educators. These allude to the possibility that the way teachers engage in dialogue and discussion on HIV/AIDS is influenced by a vast kaleidoscope of social and historical factors. I intend to explore and bring these to the fore in my research.

2.14.5. The Structural Analysis of Texts and the Role of Culture in Creating Meaning

Van Dijk (1991) sees CDA as a useful tool for studying communication with “socio-cultural contexts”. By structurally analyzing the cognitive, social, historical, cultural and political contexts from within which textual or conversational structures derive its frameworks, he contends that the understanding of the actual processes of decoding, interpretation, storage and representation in memory, the process of making meaning becomes possible. The role of previous knowledge and beliefs of the reader also influence the meaning making process.

Hall, in Dellinger (1995) distinguishes between “explicit culture” and “implicit culture”. The former includes things such as law, what people talk about and can be specific about. The latter encompasses things such as feelings, what one takes for granted or what exists on the fringes of awareness. Each culture has its own way of classifying the contents of the world.

“Meaning in a text is constructed by society, and the world is created by human beings for the purpose of that meaning. The linguistic and semantic structures which make up different languages, as symbols, are the means by which humans produce meaning” (Hall in Dellinger; 1995: 122)

The implication is that the phenomenon of “reality” and the process of assigning meaning to the various elements of our world, will be defined according to the dictates and the needs of different cultures. Hence the way in which “reality” is perceived by a particular society, will depend on how that particular society defines it. Eco, in Dellinger (1995) cautions that differences in ideological make-up of any audience in terms of ethical, religious, and psychological points of view, as well as tastes, values and preferences, inevitably leads to some sort of misunderstanding or gap, especially under those circumstances where one culture comes into contact with another. The multi- cultural classroom is a case in point.

Since my study involves the use of language, two concepts adopted from linguistic research wherein CDA has been conceptualized, requires elaboration. These are “*Semiotics*” and “*Response*”.

2.14.6 Semiotics

2.14.6.1 What is Semiotics and How Does it Relate to this Study?

According to Chandler (undated), semiotics is the study of signs (semiology) or the science that studies the life of science. He adds that semiology shows what makes up signs and looks at the laws that govern them. Signs are negotiated within a context and through a meaning making process. It follows that contextual factors need to be given due consideration in the study, by exploring the meanings derived from signs (language), as these can never be exactly the same in different contexts. Semiotics is explored as a way of constructing a sign and representing social phenomenon. In this case, it would imply the language used by educators in the way they communicate and convey information about HIV/AIDS.

2.14.6.2 Dominant Views on Semiotics

Towards the end of the nineteenth century two dominant views on semiotics emerged. Chandler (undated) made reference to the Saussurean view and the Piercian view. The discussion that follows is based on the literature of Chandler (undated).

In the Saussurean tradition, the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), who can be regarded as the founder of semiotics, argued that “a science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable”. He called this “Semiology”.

The Piercian view of Semiotics, the second dominant tradition on the science of signs, was developed by an American philosopher, Charles Sanders Pierce (1839-1914).

These two traditions differ in the manner in which they conceptualize and understand signs. A signifier (the form which the sign takes) and the signified (the concept it represents), is what every sign is composed of according to the tradition of Saussure.

The Piercian tradition views every sign as comprising of the representament (the form which the sign takes, not necessarily material), an interpretant (the sense made of the sign) and an object (to which the sign refers).

A variant of the Piercian view that one often comes across, is composed of the following elements:

- *A sign vehicle (the form of sign)*
- *Sense (the sense made of the sign)*
- *Referent (what the sign stands for)*

An essential difference that emerges from the views discussed above is the exclusion of an object in the world according to the Saussurian model. This creates an arbitrary nature of signs. The relationship between the signifier and the signified is completely arbitrary. There is no natural link between the two. In this study, the Saussure's version of sign is employed.

2.14.6.3 The Role of Context in the Meaning Making Process

Signs are negotiated within a context and through a meaning making process.

According to Tasso (1999), meaning making puts people at the centre. In contrast, structuralism puts relationships among elements. Structures are put at the centre and people are situated on the margins.

Although linguistics can be viewed as an idealized system, it does not exist in a vacuum. The system had been created through a meaning making process and can therefore not claim to be value-free or neutral. Hence the process of meaning making can never be completely divorced from values. The extent to which values influence the meaning-making process may differ. The process can be viewed as a collective product, developed through a system of social representation and therefore lends itself to interpretation. The possibility of open and multiple variations becomes a reality.

2.14.6.4 Criticisms of the Structuralist View

In the criticism leveled against the structuralist view of language, Derrida, in Sarup (1998) asserts that the signifier does not give rise to a signified directly. Consequently, there is no one-to-one harmonious correspondence between the signifier and the signified. Instead, these two elements are continually involved in dissolution and recombination processes, pointing to the flaws in Saussure's model of signs, where language exists as a function of a system. The implication is that meanings derived from signs (language) will differ from context to context and from interpretation to interpretation. Each signified would become a signifier for another signified. This is indicative of the fact that language (linguistics) is not as stable as advocates of Structuralism would desire.

2.14.6.5 Post-structuralism: The Emergence of an Alternate View

Rhedding-Jones (1995) highlights the active encouragement of ambiguity and multiplicity as being a key feature of post-structuralism. The breaking out of frames, and the ability of post-structuralism to theorize post-modernism are also essential elements.

Lather, in Rhedding-Jones (1995) believes that in theorizing about post-modernism, differences, in meaning and in the writing of these meanings, begin to emerge. The interrogation of the responses to the signifier can be applied to this interpretation of differences in meaning, as well as to the differences in the understanding of these meanings. This will allow for a state of multiplicity to come about.

The above discussion points to the possibility of semiotics being open to post-structuralist interpretation through deconstructive methods of enquiry, like “*Response*,” which merits discussion at this stage.

2.14.7 Response

2.14.7.1 A Brief History of Response

St Pierre (1999) places “response” within the domain of linguistic criticism, where scholars are more concerned with the readers’ response to text than the author’s intention, or the intrinsic meaning within the text. The response of the reader or those of the participants in a study, receive priority over other traditional methods of enquiry. New meanings can be derived in two ways. The first is the understanding of how response from a variety of relations to the phenomenon being investigated, may radically interfere with each other. The second is questioning the possible effects of this interference.

Response in my study will relate to how educators analyze and make meaning of policies, material resources and other relevant documentation on HIV/AIDS. The influence of these interpretations, on the manner in which teachers engage in dialogue and discussion on the pandemic within the classroom context, will also be explored. The possibility of new interpretations and meanings arising will also be explored. This is in congruence with St. Pierre’s research (1999), where she placed her participants at the forefront of her research, as she believes by so doing, new meanings can be created through understanding.

If we subscribe to this view then it becomes possible for a multiplicity of responses to emerge during the data collection process. This has enormous implications for my study. These multiplicity of responses need to be explored and analyzed in detail, in order to understand fully, how educators use language to convey meaning and understanding. The rationale behind classroom practices, and how this impacts on the process of making meaning, will also have to be considered. This will assist in establishing if there is a mismatch between the researcher's interpretations of the participants' responses and what the participants actually meant. This brings me to a discussion of how to counteract and minimize the effects of such a situation, should it emerge.

In St Pierre's ethnography, she raises the notion of "member-check" response. She expands on this to explore a new response category- "*Imaginary Response*" within her study.

2.14.7.2 Member-check Response

Pierre (1999), in her ethnography on a group of older white American Southern women in her hometown, concluded that "*member-check response*" data is produced when she gives back to the participants of the research, her (St Pierre's) representation of the data produced. This data was produced from the source of knowledge used by the participants in constructing their subjectivities, during the course of their long lives. The next step calls for participants to respond to the data that was constructed by the researcher. This, St. Pierre calls "*member-check response*"- an activity common to fieldwork process for data production.

In my study, my critique and interpretation of the pre-observation interviews and observation sessions will be discussed and re-visited in the post-observation interview sessions. This is where participants will be able to respond to, clarify and confirm or even dispense with any of the misconceptions or incorrect perceptions that may have arisen during the data collection process. This can serve as an “audit” or a check on the way in which the data obtained has been represented. It will also provide ample opportunities for “member-check” responses on the interpretation of my representation of the participants’ perceptions in this study. In addition, it will assist in minimizing the effects of my personal bias and prejudices that may have manifested themselves in the representation of the data that was produced. The participants’ responses to my critique and interpretation of their actions and responses during the data collection process, gives rise to yet another level of deconstructive analysis.

2.14.7.3 Imaginary Response

St. Pierre (1999) also makes reference to “*Imaginary Response*”.

“Imaginary response is the response we imagine our work or research will produce, as well as others’ response to what they imagine our work will produce” (St. Pierre; 1999:271).

Frequently as researchers, we assume in our analysis that the research participants respond to the purpose of our enquiry. We also take it for granted that this is clearly articulated to the participants in a manner that supports this purpose. Consequently, we analyze the response to understand the author’s intentions or the intrinsic meaning within his or her response.

The following questions need to be considered when conducting research:

- *Are we clear as researchers, about the nature of the responses from the participants?*
- *How do we ascertain whether the participants are responding to an imagined outcome of the research project or not?*
- *How can we establish whether or not there is a difference in the way participants respond?*
- *How do we assess the impact these different kinds of responses have on the analysis of the study?*

A consideration of the above questions becomes particularly problematic, as they emerge. These questions were instrumental in St. Pierre's ethnography (discussed above), which led her to conceptualize the second type of response, namely "*Imaginary Response*".

St. Pierre (1999) contends that a multiplicity of responses can be established and this was demonstrated in the reporting of her ethnography. These could indicate, amongst others, the different orientation one takes in their response, the audience the data is being produced for, the variables that you wish to prioritize for interpretation and the impact you want to construct. Deconstructing and unpacking the responses from participants in the study (including the researcher), would offer valuable insights within the enquiry to create new meanings within research. One way to accomplish this is through acknowledging and understanding the possibility that "imagined response" exists and that it can influence meaning making, as in the case of St. Pierre's (1999) ethnography.

Expanding on the discussion presented above, the possibility of the existence of responses motivated by a plethora of reasons other than that of an imagined response, also needs to be explored. One way of doing this, according to Ramrathan (2002) is through the adoption of the concept of “*Interrogated Response*”.

2.14.7.4 Interrogated Response and How It Is Used to Create Meaning and

Understanding within this Research Project

According to the concept of “*interrogated response*”, data is produced from research participants through analyzing the interrogated responses to a signifier by the research participants. In this study, an attempt to use “interrogated response” as a strategy to deconstruct or unpack the stance researchers take in the reporting of research, was made. The possibility of arriving at new meanings within a particular context of HIV/AIDS enquiry will be explored. According to Parker in, Simons and Usher (2000), deconstruction assumes that the linguistic vehicle that conveys content cannot be taken for granted. This content is not independent of the way it is expressed, but rather owes its meaning to the particular language and stylistic devices in which it is expressed. “*The said cannot be separated from the saying*”.

Following a brief explanation of what is meant by “interrogated response”, an attempt to highlight how information about HIV/AIDS can be created or produced through response to different relevancies and driving forces behind this response, unfolds. This provides yet another reason as to examine the knowledge of educators on HIV/AIDS because the different philosophies, ideologies and frameworks from within which they function, will give rise to different ways in which they understand and create meaning about the pandemic.

In addition, this will give rise to different ways in which they employ language to convey meaning and understanding to their learners within the classroom context. The pre-observation interview sessions will enable me as the researcher, to adopt the “interrogated response” as a strategy to ascertain the participants understanding of key concepts and ideas associated with HIV/AIDS. The manner in which this influences how teachers communicate about HIV/AIDS to facilitate meaning and understanding, will also be analyzed.

The translation of meaning into practice within the classroom context will be explored in the observation and post-observation interview sessions. Through probes, repetition and re-iteration during the interviews, responses can be unpacked and elaborated upon. Issues that have not been given prior and due consideration can receive attention and a deeper level of understanding as to why the participants react or respond in a particular way, can emerge, as both the researcher and participants actively engage in the co-production of data.

In this way, I can ascertain whether my interpretation of the responses of the participants is a “true” reflection of what they are trying to say. This will assist me in a more accurate representation of the participants in the reporting of the research, as an attempt to obtain rich and meaningful data throughout the research process is sought after. The adoption of the “interrogated response” mode of enquiry will assist to this end.

2.15 Conclusion

The literature related to the area of study as well as the implications of these for the area of study, is what received attention in this chapter. In addition, the manner in which this study was conceptualized within the CDA mode of enquiry was highlighted.

In the following chapter, I attempt to provide a detailed description of how the data in the study was obtained. A discussion of the research tools and their suitability for this particular study, as well as their benefits and limitations, comes under introspection. Attempts taken to address these shortcomings are highlighted, as are issues pertaining to the extent to which the validity and reliability of this study was increased. A discussion on how the employment of a multi-modal methodological approach (triangulation), addressed these issues, concludes the chapter.

CHAPTER: 3 - METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the third chapter of this dissertation, a detailed discussion on the methodology employed in this study is provided. The chapter opens with a distinction that is drawn between method and methodology. The suitability of the qualitative mode of inquiry within a case-study design, receives attention next. The sample selection and the selection of the research site are also discussed. Issues pertaining to validity and reliability and how these were addressed through triangulation, are also discussed. Other techniques that were used to increase the validity and reliability of research, also receive attention in this chapter.

In-depth discussions on the different research tools used in this study, namely document analysis, observations and semi-structured interviews are offered. The merits and limitations of these tools are discussed. The attempts made to address these shortcomings are also explained. The instruments that were used (How was the data collected?), the frequency with which these were used (How often?), the times at which they were administered (When?), the venues at which the data collection procedures occurred (Where?), a consideration of the person collecting the data (Who?) and the purpose they served (Were they addressing the critical questions that guided this study, and how so?) are issues that are elaborated upon in the great majority of this chapter.

3.2. Distinguishing between Methodology and Method

According to Cohen and Manion (1994), methods refer to the range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference, interpretation, explanation and prediction.

In contrast, they (Cohen and Manion; 1994) add that methodology, on the other hand, is there to assist us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific enquiry, but the process itself. In addition, methodology serves the purpose of describing and analyzing methods, as well as highlighting their strengths and limitations, thereby maximizing their application to the area of research.

In this study, a case-study design within the qualitative mode of inquiry was used, the details of which follow in Sections 3.3 and 3.4 respectively.

3.3. A Qualitative Study

3.3.1. A Brief Description of the Qualitative Mode of Inquiry

This study was qualitative in nature. At this point, it would prove useful to offer a brief explanation of the key underpinnings of qualitative research, as well as offer an explanation as to why my study was best suited to the qualitative mode of inquiry.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993), qualitative research is concerned with processes and meanings. Researchers in this field, study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. In my research, I was concerned with the meanings educators attach to concepts and ideas that occur within the HIV/AIDS discourse and how this facilitates learning within the school context.

“Scientific knowledge..... is an outcome of the critical dialogue, in which individuals and groups, holding different points of view, engage with each other. It is constructed not by individuals, but by an interactive dialogic community. A community’s practice of inquiry is productive of knowledge, to the extent that it facilitates transformative criticism.” (Longino, in Schumacher and McMillan; 1993: 112)

According to Lankshear and Knobel (2004), qualitative research is concerned with the way people experience, understand, interpret and participate in their social and cultural worlds. In addition, there is an emphasis on gathering data in “real-life situations or natural settings.” The context in which the research is conducted, is also very important as is providing rich, detailed descriptions of people in action, specific programmes or social practices.

“Context in this sense, can be taken to mean, the sum total of meaning making, social practices, social negotiations, interactions and references to other contexts and events, that shape the sense to be made of a given event or idea”. (Lankshear and Knobel; 2004: 161)

3.3.2 The Issue of Generalization in Qualitative Research

One can speak of “context-bound generalizations” in qualitative research. According to Bernard (2000), this implies that the way participants react, is strongly influenced by the settings in which the participants find themselves, emphasizing the need for research to be conducted in a context-sensitive manner. In my research, I offer a detailed description of the contextual factors of the research site in the data analysis section. These include, among others, the composition of the school (in terms of gender, race, religion and culture), the locality of the school and the medium of instruction. Other situational factors also receive due attention as these ultimately influenced the kind of data that was produced in the research process.

Schumacher and Mcmillan (1993) believe that “generalizability” is not the immediate purpose of qualitative research. The understanding of people’s experiences and the concepts generated from a case study, are often extended in subsequent case studies or more structured designs. Qualitative research is concerned with understanding the social phenomenon from the participants’ perspective. Understanding is acquired by analyzing the many contexts of the participants and by narrating particular meanings.

3.3.3 The Benefits of Qualitative Research

Among the many benefits of qualitative research, Putney (1999) believes that this mode of research assists us to explore and to understand systematically and theoretically, the local and situated nature of the classroom life and how that life is consequential for particular members or groups. Qualitative approaches provide ways of transcribing and analyzing the discursive construction of everyday events, of examining the consequential nature of learning within and across events and of exploring the historical nature of life within a social group or a local setting.

Qualitative research has also provided insights into the “*emic or insider*”. According to Putney (1999), this refers to the knowledge needed by members of a group to participate in socially and academically appropriate ways. This in turn provides information about why and how miscommunication among actors occurs, particularly when such actors are members of different groups.

In addition, the approaches employed within the qualitative mode make us aware of different voices and the need to consider whose voice will be represented, how, in what ways and for what purposes. These approaches suggest the need to consider and make visible, the voices of particular individuals, participants, groups, and communities that have traditionally not been heard.

3.3.4 Suitability of the Qualitative Mode of Inquiry for this Study

This study was well suited to the qualitative mode of inquiry as it attempted to explore the meanings attached by educators to terms and concepts associated with HIV/AIDS, and how these impact on the manner in which they engage and communicate within the HIV/AIDS discourse. The ultimate goal was to facilitate an understanding of how the language used by the educators under study, contributes to or impedes the 'meaning making' process. A case-study approach, within the critical discourse framework, was used. A discussion of the case-study design follows.

3.4. A Case Study Design

3.4.1 The Purpose of a Case-Study

"The purpose of a case-study is to probe deeply and to analyze intensively, the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life-cycle of the unit, with the view to establishing generalization about the wider population to which it belongs" (Cohen and Manion; 1994: 106).

3.4.2 Defining a Case-Study

"Case studies are singulars, involving the systematic description of a unique situation, so as to bring out its characteristic features." (Bassey; 1995: 75)

According to Bassey (1995), the study of singularities or case-studies, cannot be used to make predictions, but can be related to other situations, especially when they are well designed and carefully described. Case studies are not intended to draw general conclusions about the schooling system, but rather their strength lies in their descriptive power.

3.4.3 The Uses of a Case-Study

According to Walker, in Bassey (1995), case-studies are valuable in that they give insight into specific instances, events or situations. In addition, this approach helps to achieve a holistic and in-depth understanding of the interaction of factors and events involved in such a process. According to Schumacher and McMillan (1993), case studies are sometimes referred to as “*interpretative inquiry*”. The strength of this approach is that it is flexible and adaptable. It is therefore, a useful method in educational research.

According to Cohen and Manion (1994), case studies are advantageous in that they tend to be in harmony with the reader’s own experience. Consequently, they tend to provide a ‘natural’ basis for generalization. The case study is capable of serving multiple audiences. It can be used for a variety of purposes, including individual and staff development, within-institutional feedback, formative evaluation, and in educational policy making.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993), a case study, due to its flexibility and adoptability to a range of contexts, processes, people and foci, provides some of the most useful methods available in educational research. Case studies can provide a detailed description and analysis of processes or themes, voiced by participants in a particular situation.

3.5 Issues Pertaining to Validity and Reliability and How These Were Dealt with in the Study

Agar, in Cohen and Manion (1994), professes that in qualitative data collection, the intensive personal involvement and in-depth responses of individuals, secure a sufficient level of validity and reliability. Such a claim is accompanied by much criticism, forcing qualitative researchers to resort to a variety of means to increase the validity and reliability of their studies. In qualitative research, we speak of “the degree to which” validity and reliability can be attained, as opposed to “complete” validity and reliability. In research, one can distinguish between internal and external validity.

Cohen and Manion (1994) see internal validity as a means of seeking to demonstrate that a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides, can actually be sustained by the data. In other words, the findings must accurately describe the phenomena being researched. In this study, the use of methodological triangulation (discussed in section 3.6) addressed the issue of validity.

“*Member checking*” (“*Respondent Validation*”), as termed by Agar in Cohen and Manion (1994), was used in this study. Such an approach includes,

- assessing intentionality,*
- *correcting factual errors,*
- *offering respondents the opportunity to add further information or to put information on record and,*
- *providing summaries to check the adequacy of the analysis.*

According to Cohen and Manion (1994), external validity refers to the degree to which the results can be generalized to the wider population, cases or situations. In qualitative research, this implies '*comparability*' and '*transferability*'. Schofield, in Cohen and Manion (1994), suggests that by providing a clear, detailed and in-depth description so that others can decide the extent to which findings from one piece of research are generalizable to another situation, the twin issues of comparability and transferability can be addressed.

By treating each of the three participants as a case in themselves, whereby a detailed description of their backgrounds, levels of experience, training and individual histories, were provided, it was hoped that such measures would assist in addressing the issue of generalizability (discussed in Section 3.2.2) A "thick description" of the research site, sample, data collection and analysis procedures was also offered, in an attempt to increase the transferability and comparability of this study.

Bogdan and Biklen, in Cohen and Manion (1994), believe that reliability in qualitative research, relates to a "match or fit" between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched. In other words, these relate to the degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage. This incorporates fidelity to real life situations, context- and situation-specificity, authenticity, comprehensiveness, detail, honesty, depth of response and meaningfulness. The use of more than one instrument in the data collection process, assisted in enhancing the reliability of the data obtained. A brief discussion, of these multiple modalities of inquiry, follows.

3.6. Triangulation

According to Cohen and Manion (1994), triangulation implies the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. This can be used as a check on validity. Triangulation between methods, involves the use of more than one method, in the pursuit of a given objective. Triangulation can be useful when complex phenomena such as, a case study, is being researched.

According to Brewer and Hunter (1989), the use of multi-methods is an attempt to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. The use of multiple methods in this research served as a means of triangulation. Document analysis, semi-structured interviews and observation were used in this study, as a means of methodological triangulation. This encompasses the use of different methods on the same object of study, as well as, using the same method on different occasions. Attempts to ensure the validity of each of these instruments were undertaken in the study. These will be elaborated upon in the ensuing discussion.

3.7. The Sample

According to Patton (1990), purposeful sampling is used to select ‘information-rich’ cases for in-depth studies. The researcher selects participants on the basis of predetermined criteria about the extent to which, these participants could contribute to the research study.

The primary objective is to increase the utility of information that is obtained from small samples. This type of sampling involves obtaining information about variations among the subunits before the sample is chosen. The researcher then searches for “information-rich” key informants, groups, places or events to study. These samples are selected because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena that the researcher is investigating. The ultimate goal is to yield deep insights about the topic under study.

Since my study involves the exploration of language employed by primary school educators in HIV/AIDS prevention education, I specifically dealt with the three educators who were involved in the execution of such programmes at the institution under study. These were the Life Orientation educators in the senior primary phase. This was the only learning area in which any form of HIV/AIDS prevention education, received attention.

3.8. Site Selection

According to Mcmillan and Schumacher (1993), this involves the selection of a site to locate people who are involved in a particular event, when the research focus is on complex micro-processes. I chose to work with the school that I taught at, since I was familiar with the internal dynamics of the school. This would also allow me to gain access to in- depth information for the production of rich and meaningful data.

It also placed me in a position to develop and foster meaningful relationships during the data collection process. Participants were familiar with me, since I was a fellow colleague. The tendency for participants to display reluctance and to withhold valuable information, was somewhat reduced, as participants exhibited a degree of comfort in participating in the study.

A description of the instruments that were used to obtain the data collected and analyzed in the study, will now be provided. These include document analysis, classroom and lesson observations and interviews. A discussion on document analysis will introduce this discussion.

3.9. Document Analysis

3.9.1 Defining Document Analysis

Krippendorff (1980) views document analysis as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data, to their content. According to Lankshear and Knobel (2004), one of the purposes for which document analysis is used, is to identify meanings. Researchers often engage in this mode of inquiry to investigate the meanings through texts. This allows for the revelation of the kind of ideological work that texts may do and how they may intentionally or not, direct the reader into viewing and approaching the world in some ways, rather than others.

3.9.2 Documents Used in this Study

The documents examined in this study included among others, The National Policy on HIV/AIDS (1999), The School Policy on HIV/AIDS, The Strategic Plan 2003-2005, The HIV/AIDS Emergency: Guidelines for Educators, The School Policy and the textbooks and learning materials or resources used in the execution of HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives at school level.

Through the careful examination of these documents, emergent themes within the discourse on HIV/AIDS were identified. These formed the basis of the interviews, since these were issues that were explored in the study. They also have assisted me in the structuring and categorizing of data that was produced during the course of this study. These themes were used in the analysis of data.

3.9.3. Conducting Document Analysis

According to Knobel and Shear (1994), concepts tend to be cultural productions, so we need to exercise caution when we use documents as data. We need to look carefully, at the conceptual claims that are made and how these contribute to particular meanings, as well as, examine the various beliefs and practices upon which these rest. One needs to bear in mind that within the domain of education itself, there are often multiple accounts of key concepts. When the opportunity arises to question the meaning assigned to a particular concept, we can argue that there are different ways to understand the concept and provide reasons for saying so.

It is advised by Lankshear and Knobel (2004) that when we read others work, we assess the concepts in terms of their clarity, consistency and usefulness. In addition, it is suggested that we examine how these concepts relate to other people's accounts and factors at stake between different accounts. A useful way of clarifying a concept is by distinguishing it from some similar concepts.

In this study, the key themes that emerged in the documents consulted on HIV/AIDS were used as a basis for the pre-observation interviews. This was done after a preliminary literature review was conducted in the area of study. The literature review was developed and sharpened throughout the study. The pre-observation interviews provided the basis for the observation sessions, where the intention was to explore how the educators understanding of the various concepts and ideas that featured in the above-mentioned documents, translated into practice.

Classroom observation was another instrument used in the data collection process. I will now provide an elaboration of how this instrument was used in the study.

3.10 Classroom Observation

3.10.1 Defining Classroom Observation as a Tool in Conducting Educational Research

According to Spradley (1980), observation involves carefully planned, deliberate and systematic examinations of what is taking place, who is involved, when and where everything is happening.

3.10.2 The Benefits of Using Observation in Research

Moser and Kalton, in Wragg (1999), believe that observation enables the researcher to observe and study life of the community as a whole, as well as the relationships between its members, activities and institutions. Observations also provide information about a candidate's knowledge and understanding, especially when it is supplemented by questioning from the observer. This approach lends itself well to educational research. It helps to explain the means by which an orderly, social world is established and maintained in terms of its shared meanings.

This notion of "shared meanings" is particularly important to my study, where the need to communicate effectively about HIV/AIDS rests in there being a basal level of commonality about contrived meanings, derived from messages that are sent out from educators and schools. The world is subjectively ordered, having particular meanings for its different occupants. It is these meanings that my research seeks to derive and understand.

3.10.3 Classroom Observation in this Study

Cohen and Manion (1994) highlight various advantages to using this approach in research. Among others, these include the fact that non-verbal behaviour can be noted. In this study, the participants (the three Life Orientation educators), were observed during lessons. The aim was to establish and assess their levels of understanding and interpretation of the policies and resources on HIV/AIDS. The manner in which this understanding, translated into practice at classroom level, was also explored. Lessons stretching over a weeks' duration were observed.

Both, the verbal and non-verbal language used by the educators were examined, in terms of how these influence instruction on HIV/AIDS prevention. An observation schedule, consisting of questions that guided the observation process, was constructed. [Refer to Appendix 3]. Themes that emerged from the analysis of the various documents pertaining to the study, from the literature reviewed and those that arose in the pre-observation interview sessions formed the basis of constructing this schedule.

The postures, movements, gestures, facial expressions and eye contact of participants were observed and noted to gain a holistic understanding of how educators communicate about issues pertinent to HIV/AIDS with their learners, and how this impacts on the transmission of knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS. Semiotic analysis, as explained in Chapter 2, Section 2.14.6, relates to this aspect of the study in that semiotics was used to analyze the signs and suggestions used by the teachers in their engagement in the lessons and teaching activities.

These signs and suggestions were used to analyze and interpret the teachers' understanding of the terms and concepts commonly associated with HIV/AIDS education, and how this understanding influenced the manner in which teachers engaged in learning activities with their learners. In this regard, it would be noteworthy to mention that the non-verbal component of communication is a significant one, in that it may support or contradict the verbal message. The impact of these signs and suggestions on the intended outcomes of the lesson, how these outcomes translate into practice and how these suggestions influence the meaning making process also received attention.

According to Wragg (1999), variations in voice (change in pitch, adjustment of loudness or softness, the emphasis of certain words), gestures (pointing a finger or spreading their arms to make a point more clearly or emphatically) and body language (leaning casually on the desk, holding ones hands tightly under the armpits) can enhance or inhibit the learning process. One needs to bear this in mind as body language does inform the researcher's judgment, even though he or she may not write down details about non-verbal opinion.

In addition, observation allows for the researcher to discern ongoing behaviour as it occurs. Appropriate notes about salient features can be recorded. Since this mode of inquiry takes place over an extended period of time, the researcher can develop a more intimate and informal relationship with the participants in the study. This has the potential of developing a more natural setting.

In my case, the fact that I shared a history with the participants was a further advantage. The fact, that the participants in the study were fellow colleagues, allowed for a degree of comfort for the participants. The likelihood that the participants would be affected by my presence during their lessons, was somewhat reduced. Observations were recorded by means of field notes. According to Clifford in, LeCompte and Schensul (1999), good field notes are written in the heat of the moment as events unfold before the researchers' eyes. These tend to be the primary data collection tool in the observation process.

3.10.4 Shortcomings of Classroom Observation and Attempts to deal with these in this Study

The very presence of someone additional, in this case, the researcher who is not normally present in the classroom, may itself influence what happens. To minimize the intrusion, I met with the participants in advance to clarify the purpose of the research. This assisted in ensuring that what would be observed was as natural and un-staged as possible.

This would also help to minimize or alleviate any possible confusion that was bound to occur. In this research, the purpose of the study was clearly outlined to participants at the onset of the pre-observation interview sessions.

Like with most other research instruments, observations have their own set of limitations. One such limitation is the inevitable situation, where the researcher tends to pass value-judgments on the chain of events that are observed in the classroom context. Also inevitable, is the fact that researchers' own beliefs about how teaching and learning occurs, influences his or her perception of the events that unfold in the classroom.

Since I was an educator at the institution under study, it was difficult to detach myself from my own prior knowledge, beliefs, commitments and prejudices about a place I knew very well and had seen everyday for a period of many years. In an attempt to deal with this shortcoming, I had to shed the worst of my pre-judgments, approach the observation process with an open mind and constantly ask myself, “*What, if anything, might get in the way, of me seeing things objectively?*” I had to carefully reflect upon my own views on what I perceived to be “effective teaching” and constantly remind myself that there are often several opinions about quality, not just my own.

The employment of a “*member- check response*” mode of inquiry, as explained in chapter 2, section 2. 14.7.2, assisted me in ensuring that the manner in which I had interpreted the chain of events that transpired in the classroom context, was an accurate one. The use of post-observation interviews also served to verify the interpretations and representations of signs and suggestions that presented themselves during the course of the observation of lessons.

On the other hand, the situation could be viewed quite differently. I was in a position to understand the significance of events that might have eluded an outsider. Outsiders may be bewildered by what they see or even misinterpret events, as a result of their unfamiliarity. The effect of the presence of an outsider was mediated because I was an educator in the same school and the participants and learners were familiar with me.

The interpretation of body language can be mistaken as some postures, facial expressions and movements can be ambiguous. Wragg (1999) asserts that we frequently perceive exactly what transmitters of messages and signals want us to perceive, although there are instances, where these signals are perceived in a different manner as a result of ambiguities or misinterpretations of moods and messages. In this study, the post-observation interview sessions helped to clarify the interpretation of events that transpired in the classroom, thereby affirming, adjusting or accurately representing these by re-examining, altering or changing them altogether, if and when the need arose.

The use of purposeful sampling served to check on the level of accuracy in the representation of the events that were observed. It also helped to cross-check the interpretations of the meanings, attached to those events, by the participants. This assisted in the checking of the external validity of the observation process. The fact that I was familiar with my colleagues who participated in the research, allowed for a more in-depth presentation of their behaviour patterns in the reporting of this research.

By using triangulation of data sources and methodologies, an attempt to increase the internal validity of the study, was made. The 'trustworthiness' of the research is more likely to be plausible, as a result.

The third instrument used in the study, was interviews, to which I now turn attention.

3.11. Interviews

3.11.1 Defining Interviews

“Interviews are planned, prearranged interactions between two or more people, where one person is responsible for asking questions pertaining to a particular theme or topic of formal interest and the other (or others) are responsible for responding to these questions.” (Lankshear and Knobel; 2004: 198)

3.11.2 The Purpose of Interviews

The purpose of interviews is to obtain detailed and desired information about an event, programme or person that would not otherwise be possible to obtain by means of other research tools or instruments.

Carspecken (1996) advocates the following as reasons for embarking on interviews, as a tool for gathering data:

- generate content about an event from an ‘insider’s’ perspective,*
- access a person’s definitions and understandings of concepts and processes that are of interest to the researcher,*
- tap into beliefs, values, worldviews and the like on the part of the interviewee,*
- study the way in which a teacher represents his or her identity by means of the words that he or she chooses to use,*
- collect personal oral narratives about teaching (and learning) and,*
- collect biographies or life stories of teachers, administrators and others.*

3.11.3. How were Interviews used in this Study?

Semi- structured interviews were used in this study.

3.11.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

According to Wragg (1999), semi-structured interviews tend to raise key questions, as well as allow the researcher and the participant to have some natural conversation about events.

Interviews with the educators were conducted prior to the observations in an attempt to understand, as fully as possible, the manner in which educators use language to facilitate learning about HIV/AIDS [Refer to Appendix: 2]. Interviews were also conducted with these participants after the observations, in an attempt to understand the events that transpired in the classroom. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed [Refer to Appendix: 4].

A semi-structured interview can be described as,

“A continuum, representing the amount of control the researcher tries to exercise over people’s response”. (Bernard; 2000: 123)

This type of interview includes a list of pre-prepared questions, but the researcher uses this as a guide only and follows up on relevant comments made by the interviewee. This allows for the researcher to probe interviewees’ responses.

Heyl (2001) believes that this type of interview encourages elaboration of important themes emerging in the course of the interview, rather than tying interviewer and interviewee to a fixed schedule that can limit opportunities to enrich spoken data and gain insights into how interviewees 'see' and understand the world. Researchers can readily compare different responses to the same questions whilst at the same time remain open to important, but unforeseen information or points of discussion.

3.11.4. The Limitations of using Interviews as a Research Tool and Attempts to Alleviate these in the Course of this Study

One has to bear in mind some of the limitations of using interviews as an instrument in the data collection process. Participants' responses occur at a particular point in time and within a contrived interaction. Carspecken (1996) adds that interviews will not be able to capture everything a respondent thinks, feels, values or believes about something. In addition, he believes that data collected in interviews are always partial and incomplete. It is for this very reason that I have used other instruments to collect data.

Sources of bias also need to be acknowledged, as a shortcoming of using interviews in the data collection process. Such limitations include, according to Cohen and Manion (1994), a tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support his or her own preconceived notions, misperceptions on the part of the interviewer of what the respondent is saying, misunderstandings on the part of the respondent of what is being asked and a tendency for the interviewer to see the respondents in his or her own image.

On the commencement of the data collection and analysis processes, I had to temporarily suspend my own opinions and judgments. I also had to ensure that participants in my research were represented in a manner that did not necessarily, mirror my own image. This was no easy task, as I was a member of the institution myself. By employing the “*member-check response*” method in the data collection process, I was in a position to ensure that the data was not just a reflection of my personal convictions on the area of study, but interpretations from the participants’ points of view.

Through the use of probes and clarification, I was able to gain a better understanding of issues from the participants’ perspective. By using repetition and clarification, I was in a position to explain and alleviate any possible misrepresentations of exactly what it was that I was asking. The “*interrogated response*” mode of inquiry assisted me in improving the validity and reliability of the data obtained.

Fetterman (1998) believes that interviews are always contrived, since there is some “conscious shaping of verbal exchanges”, by both the participant and the researcher. Frequently, what is talked about is shaped directly by the kinds of questions asked and the prompts given by the researcher. It follows that interviews can be seen as a process where the researcher and the respondent co-construct data. The respondent tends to be more a participant in the research process, than just a subject on which research is done.

By using leading questions in the interviews, I was able to conduct “reliability checks”, with what the interviewee had already said. This assisted in eliciting particular non-verbal behaviours that further enhanced the quality of data obtained. These non-verbal behaviours were noted and followed up on, by using questions that explored the meanings attached to those responses.

Researchers believe that despite the limitations of interviews, this research tool remains the best means for assessing study participants’ opinions, beliefs, values and situated accounts of events at a particular point in time.

“Interviews are shared, negotiated and dynamic social moments”. (Cohen and Manion; 1994: 122)

If we acknowledge and accept this view, it becomes inevitable that the merits offered by interviews as a research tool are not ignored. Its’ significance in revealing multiple interpretations and valuable insights, made this instrument an indispensable one in this study.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter offered a critical examination of the methodology used in the study, in terms of the rationale for employing the qualitative mode of inquiry, the merits and imitations of the various instruments used in the study, as well as the attempts made to address the shortcomings posed by the various instruments. A discussion of the data obtained, as a result of employing the methodology discussed in this chapter, is what receives attention next, as I draw my attention to chapter four.

CHAPTER: 4 - DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

In this pen-ultimate chapter, the focus is on the interpretation and analysis of the data that was obtained through the data collection process of this study. The chapter opens with a detailed description of the research site in terms of its location, composition, medium of instruction, HIV/AIDS preventative initiatives, training of teaching and non-teaching staff members and involvement of governing body and parental involvement. An in-depth discussion of the participants in the study, in terms their subject preferences, subject specializations, experience, training, involvement in HIV/AIDS and other school intervention initiatives are some of the information that are presented here. This is consistent with case studies.

An attempt is made to draw similarities, differences and possible variations between the emergent themes cited in the literature reviewed and those that were evident in the data collected. Explanations, as to why these may have occurred, are offered. The reporting of the findings of this research assumes a thematic based approach, where the perceptions of each participant are explored. Parallels are drawn in terms of commonalities and inconsistencies that were evident in the data obtained. Attempts to provide possible reasons for these, as supported by those cited in the literature consulted, and by the data obtained in the post-observation interviews, offers a basis for this analysis.

Through the “interrogated response” mode of inquiry, inconsistencies between the responses given by participants in the pre-observation interviews and what was actually evident in the lessons observed, were addressed and expanded upon in the post- observation interviews. These also informed much of the discussion undertaken in this chapter.

4.2. A Description of the Research Site

4.2.1 Source of information

The deputy principal of the school, incidentally a participant in the study, was a rich source of information relating to the school dynamics in terms of location, composition, description, statistics and general information. This type of purposive sampling can be regarded as opportunistic, and has been adopted from the doctoral studies of Ramrathan (2002).

The information presented below was obtained from the deputy principal prior to the interviews, as well as from EMIS (Education Management Information System) forms. EMIS forms contain information and statistics relating to things such as the school’s learner and educator population, the racial composition of the school, the home language of the learners and educators, just to mention but a few.

4.2.2. School Location and Composition

The school under study was a co-educational, urban, primary school, in the Durban Metropolitan area, Kwa-Zulu Natal. The school fell under the domain of a public school. The staff comprised of seventeen level one educators, a deputy principal, three heads of department (one assigned to the foundation phase and two assigned to the senior primary phase) and a principal or head of institution. The total number of staff members amounted to twenty two.

There were seven foundation phase units (Grades 1-3), and ten intermediate and senior phase units (Grades 4-7). The entire staff was of Indian origin, with the exception of one African educator in the senior primary phase.

The learner composition was approximately seven hundred and twenty two, with ninety seven percent of the learners being of African origin. The remaining three percent was divided among Coloured and Asian learners.

4.2.3. The Medium of Instruction

Despite ninety seven percent of the learners coming from home backgrounds where the mother tongue was not English, the medium of instruction was English. The mother tongue languages of the majority of these learners comprised of Zulu, Xhosa and Sotho.

In other words the majority of learners received instruction in their non-mother tongue language. This was in accordance with the language policy at the school. The school was categorized as an “English medium” school. The rationale advocated for this, was that many English second language parents wanted their children to become fluent in English so they sent them to this English medium school.

4.2.4. HIV/AIDS Preventative Education Initiatives at School Level

Even though the contents of the National Policy on HIV/AIDS was made familiar to all staff members, at a general staff meeting, it was only the management team who were involved in the formulation of the school policy on HIV/AIDS. This was done within the broad framework of the National Policy on HIV/AIDS (Department of Education, 1999). Copies of these were circulated to educators, who were requested to familiarize themselves with its contents at their leisure. (See Appendix: 5)

A summarized version of the universal precautions on HIV/AIDS preventative education, was made available to educators by the deputy principal. In addition a short staff meeting, chaired by a level one educator who attended a series of workshops on HIV/AIDS, was held to brief educators on these precautions. Educators were given tips on how to manage accidents and injuries at school-level. Professional development, in terms of instituting support structures to assist with the execution of HIV/AIDS programmes within the classroom context, had not taken place at the time of the study.

A pair of gloves was handed to each educator as a precautionary measure with regard to the spread of HIV/AIDS. This was to be used when administering general first aid at school. Educators were requested to obtain replacement pairs of gloves from the school secretary when the ones that were issued, were used up. Other first aid items such as gauzes, dressings for wounds, band aids, disinfectants, scissors and materials to cover wounds were kept with the secretary. Items that were obtained from the secretary were used to fill up a basic first aid kit when learners were taken on excursions or to sporting events. This was in accordance with The HIV/AIDS Emergency Guidelines for Educators (Department of Education, 1999) which recommends that every school has a first aid kit, with the above-mentioned essential contents.

4.2.5 Training Received by Teaching Staff Members

With regard to formal training received on HIV/AIDS education, this was restricted to certain educators in the senior primary phase only. Educators involved in the teaching of Life Orientation were afforded the opportunity to attend workshops on HIV/AIDS education. The duration of this training was one week. Not all teachers in the senior primary phase had received training.

Those educators who had never taught Life Orientation received no formal training on HIV/AIDS education to date. This is indicative of certain educators, specifically those involved in the Life Orientation Learning Area, being selected for training whilst all other educators were being excluded or marginalized at the very least. The rationale behind the selection process for training needs to be questioned and explored.

This is indicative of power-relations being present within this particular school context. Opportunities for the briefing of information and for the sharing of ideas relating to HIV/AIDS education, was clearly not afforded to all educators within this particular institution, providing evidence of unequal access to information within the teaching fraternity at the institution under study.

No foundation phase educator had received any training in HIV/AIDS education. At the time of this study, the foundation phase educators were awaiting confirmation of dates of an HIV/AIDS workshop to be scheduled during the course of the year. The deputy principal and principal attended training sessions on HIV/AIDS education, which were also of a week's duration. The format that these sessions had assumed, differed from those that were offered to the level- one educators, in that they dealt with issues pertaining to HIV/AIDS from the perspective of managing HIV/AIDS education within the school context. Level- one educators received training with regard to the actual teaching and execution of lessons that fell within the domain of HIV/AIDS education. Topics cited as examples by the participants were issues relating to "*Establishing healthy and meaningful relationships with the opposite sex, Decision-making regarding Sexual Activity, Abstinence versus Safe Sexual Behaviours, Contraception and Means of HIV transmission*".

Information and resources obtained at these training sessions were forwarded to heads of department, who were requested to circulate copies among the educators involved in the Life Orientation learning area. These were utilized in the teaching of their Life Orientation lessons. Worksheets and learning aids were developed by the teachers from these resources. These materials were essentially, what the learners engaged with in their Life Orientation lessons on HIV/AIDS.

4.2.6. Training of Non-teaching Staff Members

The school secretary and three caretakers attended a three day workshop on HIV/AIDS Emergency Guidelines. They were informed of general precautionary measures to take when dealing with incidents at school, and how to administer basic first aid to learners, should the need arise.

4.2.7. Involvement of School Governing Body

The role of the governing body in initiatives to promote HIV/AIDS education was somewhat limited. They viewed these as falling within the domain of curricular matters, which they believed to fall within the job description of the educators. The governing body focused largely on issues relating to resource provisions and fund-allocations. Hence they were instrumental in fund-raising initiatives pertaining to the school.

Consequently, the content of programmes pertaining to HIV/AIDS education, were left to the discretion of educators. The distinct demarcation of tasks, into those that were geared towards fundraising tasks and those that fell within the domain of curricular matters, ensured that each of the stakeholders functioned in isolation with regard to the above-mentioned tasks. The former was seen as the task of the governing body and the latter, that of the educators.

“ The governing body should leave matters related to teaching to educators” Matters relating to funding and upgrading school facilities should be left to members of the governing body, as this is an area where their assistance is much needed”.(Teacher Y).

4.2.8. Parental Involvement

The parent component of the school consisted of a predominantly working class generation, with both parents working in the average household. Many parents left home at early hours of the morning and returned at late hours of the evening. Due to financial burdens and time constraints, as a result of work commitments, many parents were unable to become as involved in their child’s work as is educationally desirable.

“Many of our learners come from homes where both parents work long hours to make ends meet. In addition, learners travel long distances to and from school” (Teacher Y).

The fact that many parents did not reside close to the school premises, posed another challenge. This is not to say that parents were disinterested in their children's work or did not want to become involved. Often, circumstances beyond their control mitigated optimal levels of parental involvement. Consequently, the majority of parents were unable to become actively involved in the HIV/AIDS education programmes that were offered at the school.

4.2.9 Concluding Remarks on the Research Site

What was clearly evident from the above discussion was the disjunction between the medium of instruction and the majority of the learners' (97%) mother-tongue language. The minimal involvement of the governing body and the parental component of the institution, in the HIV/AIDS education programmes at the school, were also highlighted.

The discrepancy in the levels of training received among level-one educators was also brought to the fore. Life Orientation, intermediate and senior phase educators received training whereas educators not involved in this learning area and those belonging to the foundation phase, did not receive any training in HIV/AIDS education. This alludes to unequal access to information and resources among educators.

The difference in emphasis of HIV/AIDS training between level-one teachers and members of management was also discussed, indicating a need for exchange of ideas and for information sharing. These considerations of how teachers access and make meaning of terms and concepts commonly associated with HIV/AIDS, needs to be borne in mind, as the study now shifts focus to a detailed profile of participants in the study.

4.3. A Detailed Profile of the Participants in the Study

4.3.1. Profile: 1 – Teacher X

This educator was an unprotected, temporary, level one educator (UTE), at the institution under study. An unprotected temporary educator is one who is not permanently based at a particular institution. Instead a UTE is one who moves around from school to school, occupying positions as substitute educators for those educators who are on leave for whatever reason. A UTE may also hold a vacant post that is going to be advertised in a vacancy list, to be released by the Department of Education. He or she can apply for this position in an attempt to become permanently based at that school.

Teacher X was actually qualified to teach in the foundation phase (Grades 1-3), but as a result of a shortfall in the intermediate teaching phase, she was teaching in the latter phase at the time of study. Her teaching experience amounted to a total of two years. This educator was in her mid twenties and being the parent of a five year old herself, admitted to having a bias towards working with younger children (five to nine years of age).

In fact, she went so far as to openly admit, that she was uncomfortable with teaching children older than this age. She complained of being ill equipped to handle the disciplinary problems, posed by children in the five to nine year age group. The male learners, she contended, were particularly problematic in this regard. Hailing from a conservative Hindu background, she felt that her religious norms and moral standards were being challenged by the subject matter she had to present to learners. She was clearly uncomfortable, with talking about issues pertaining to sex and sexuality, with learners. Furthermore she was unable to communicate in Zulu, on any level.

She also felt enormously burdened with a “heavy” teaching load, and said that it was a time-consuming and an energy draining task, to become acquainted with the various learning areas, and subject matter, in these different learning areas. She also had to engage with the policy documents pertaining to the revised new curriculum (RNCS), in the intermediate phase, for which she had undergone no formal training.

Life Orientation in Grade six, was among her varied allocation, of learning areas ranging across the intermediate (Grades 4-6) phase. Technology, Social Science and Afrikaans were the other learning areas she was involved in teaching. Not having a base room from which to operate worsened matters. She did not have a form class. Her function was to relieve all other educators in the intermediate and senior phases, so that they would be presented with their non-teaching periods, as was entitled to them.

She had received no formal training in HIV/AIDS education, nor had she attended any workshops in this regard. This educator was merely presented with textbooks from within which, she had to structure and organise her lesson plans and learning activities. Supervision, in the form of guidance and support from her heads of department, was minimal. Getting her records prepared, according to the demands of the senior primary head of department, added to her stress levels as did the preparation for the up and coming baseline evaluation in the integrated quality management system (IQMS). Professional development was left to her own initiatives. She was placed in a precarious situation, where she had to find her own way.

4.3.2. Profile: 2 – Teacher Y

This educator is exceptionally experienced in HIV/AIDS education. He has received formal training as a Life Orientation teacher. Over and above this, he has received training on HIV/AIDS education in his capacity as being part of the school's management team. He had received a certificate for this training. Additional learning areas, which he had been assigned to, included Arts and Culture and Technology. His love for the visual arts and for music in particular, made him most suitable for teaching these learning areas. He was constantly involved in attending numerous workshops in the various learning areas he teaches, as well as those directed at improving his management skills. Professional development received high priority with this educator.

At the time of this study, he was involved in the teaching of Life Orientation at Grade six and Grade seven levels. His area of expertise lies in Special Needs Education. Having come from a “special school” background he was in a position to handle learners, from a vast kaleidoscope of backgrounds, with a tremendous amount of empathy and sensitivity. He had nineteen years of experience, in dealing with learners with special needs.

He is a seasoned teacher who has been in the profession for thirty one years. Being in his early fifties, his maturity and expertise in the subject matter had made it possible, for him to engage in dialogue and discussion on HIV/AIDS, with greater ease than other members of staff. He has a particular interest in working with learners from disadvantaged home backgrounds. At the institution under study, he was regarded as a “father figure”. Learners from all grades, especially those from the senior classes, felt particularly comfortable in seeking assistance from him, in an advisory capacity. His skills, as a counselor, came in handy as several of the learners posed behavioural and social problems. Being a parent of two adolescent children himself, added to his experience in dealing with learners in this age group.

Despite being a male he expressed little reservations about speaking, to both sexes, about sex and sexuality. On the contrary, he admitted to enjoying his Life Orientation lessons, especially with the Grade seven learners. Being a non-believer in any one particular religion, his all embracing and universal approach to religion and spirituality, enabled him to see issues relating to sex and sexuality, from a broader and holistic perspective. He believed that the merits that HIV/AIDS education has to offer, far outweigh its’ disadvantages.

In fact he was actively involved in encouraging many level one educators to explore issues, relating to sex and sexuality, in a more open manner with their learners. In this way he had hoped to assist in the personal and professional development of various staff members. Acting in a supportive and advisory capacity, he was able to successfully change the perceptions of many an educator towards the benefits of introducing HIV/AIDS education into their classrooms. At the time of this study he was also involved in liaising with other educators on the staff who had been for HIV/AIDS education training, in an attempt to establish an HIV/AIDS awareness committee for learners at school level. He rated his command of the Zulu language as being average.

4.3.3 Profile: 3 – Teacher Z

This educator hails from a Human Movement (Physical Education) background. She is a fully fledged senior primary teacher, trained to teach Grades four to seven. At the time of study, she was a Grade six teacher. Her allocation of learning areas included Mathematics, Afrikaans, Social Science and Life Orientation. She is a permanent level one educator. Her total teaching experience amounted to seventeen years.

This teacher was actively involved in professional development at school level. She was part of the Integrated Quality Management System Committee (IQMS) at school. Consequently, she had attended numerous workshops in that regard. In addition, she had received training on HIV/AIDS education, in her capacity as a level one intermediate phase teacher. Being a mother of two children aged eleven and eight years respectively, she had the necessary skills to handle children in the age group she was teaching.

At the time of the study, she was involved in preparations for a workshop on HIV/AIDS education to be conducted at school level for all members of staff. The purpose of this workshop would be to educate teachers, who have not been to workshops on HIV/AIDS education, as to how they could incorporate basic information on the topic in their Life-Skills and Life Orientation lessons. Basic information on The National Policy on HIV/AIDS, as well as on the School Policy, would also be cascaded to teachers during these sessions. Resource materials on the topic, in her possession, were to be duplicated and circulated to teachers. In addition, ideas as to how these could be incorporated into Life Orientation lessons were to be suggested to teachers.

Coming from an Islamic background, she admitted that it was particularly difficult to engage in “open” discussion and dialogue with learners on HIV/AIDS. Sex and issues pertaining to sex and sexuality, were seen as “taboo” in Islamic society. Even though the need for such discussion has proved to be pertinent, she contended that Islamic society was still somewhat conservative in this regard especially regarding sexual relations outside the realm of marriage. Although the great majority of learners were not from an Islamic background, she still admitted to not being totally comfortable with the idea of presenting lessons pertaining to sex and sexuality to these learners. She contended that her skills in communicating in Zulu were limited and confined to what she had acquired over the years in her experiences, with teaching African children. The acquisition of her Zulu vocabulary could be regarded as, “*Kitchen Zulu*”, as she termed it.

4.4. Analysis of Data Obtained in this Study

4.4.1. Approach Used in the Reporting of the Findings of this Research Project

A thematic based approach was used in this study. The field-notes obtained in the interviews and observations, as well as the topics that emerged, in the analysis of the various documents used in the study, were used as a basis of selecting recurrent themes. Perceptions of the participants, authors and researchers in the area of study, educational experts, and those of the researcher in this study, observations and practices noted in the study, as they relate to these emergent themes, were documented and analyzed.

The literature works that supported or contradicted these findings were discussed in the capacity of the relation they might have borne to the area of study. Hence, the preliminary literature reviewed in Chapter Two comes under much introspection in this section of the study, especially in the light of the findings of the research, as evident in the data that was obtained. My own personal insights and critique, of both the literature reviewed and the data that was collected, also permeate much of the discussion, in the reporting of this research project.

4.4.2. Themes that Emerged from the Document Analysis and that were explored in the Study

The recurrent themes that emerged as a result of a thorough and detailed document analysis were noted. These served as a framework for and informed much of discussion during the data collection and analysis phases of the research. What follows is an outline of the key issues, terms and concepts that were identified from the documents that were analyzed. These were further explored and developed in the study.

The documents consulted and analyzed included, The National Policy on HIV/AIDS for Learners and Educators in Public Schools and in Further Education Training Institutions (1999); The HIV/AIDS Emergency Guidelines for Educators (1999); The Strategic Plan – Statement of Policy and Commitment by the Minister of Education (2003); The School's policy on HIV/AIDS and material resources such as textbooks, worksheets and other learning materials that were used in the execution of lessons pertaining to HIV/AIDS education at the time of study.

The National policy on HIV/AIDS (1999) makes provisions for a continuing life-skills and HIV/AIDS education programme at all schools. This programme should be age-appropriate and should be integrated in the life skills education programme for pre-primary, primary and secondary school learners. The focus of such a programme should be providing information on HIV/AIDS and developing the life-skills necessary for the prevention of HIV transmission.

An essential component of HIV/AIDS education, according to the National Policy on HIV/AIDS (1999) is empowering learners to deal with a variety of situations surrounding HIV/AIDS discourse. This includes amongst others, the role of drugs, sexual abuse, violence and sexually transmitted diseases in the transmission of HIV. Raising awareness on prejudice and stereotypes around HIV/AIDS should also form part of HIV/AIDS education. The cultivation of an enabling environment that fosters and nurtures a culture of non-discrimination towards persons with HIV/AIDS, should also be a key outcome of HIV/AIDS education.

The provision of accurate information pertaining to prevention and avoidance measures relating to issues such as abstinence from sexual intercourse and immorality, the use of condoms and faithfulness to one's partner, just to mention but a few, are areas that educators need to explore with their learners. These themes should be dealt with in an accurate and scientific manner and in language and terms that are understandable. The school or institution offering such a programme is obliged to inform parents of learners of the learning content and methodology to be used, as well as of the values to be imparted.

Further, the school is expected to draw up a school policy on HIV/AIDS education. Whilst the basic principles laid down by the National Policy on HIV/AIDS (1999) should form the basis of the school policy, the needs and values of the specific school and the specific communities it serves, should be taken into consideration in the formulation of the implementation plan. Major role-players in the wider school community, including parents; religious and community leaders; representatives of the medical profession; educators and learners, just to mention but a few, should all be consulted in the drawing up of the school policy on HIV/AIDS education. An excerpt of the school policy on HIV/AIDS of the school under study is included in this research project (See Appendix: 5). Relevant comments on this policy and the participants perception of this policy, occur later in this chapter (Refer to Section 4.4.3).

The HIV/AIDS Emergency Guidelines for Educators (1999) asserts that educators have a pivotal role to play in spreading correct information about HIV/AIDS, in an attempt to curb the disease and its effects. Ensuring adequate access to appropriate information to both learners and educators is also an essential outcome of The Strategic Plan (2003). Special mention is made of the necessary training of all educators in HIV/AIDS education for the successful implementation of HIV/AIDS education within the school context.

The use of HIV/AIDS related materials, references and resources should be used in the execution of HIV/AIDS education, as highlighted in the National Policy on HIV/AIDS (1999). Consequently numerous textbooks, worksheets and other learning resources were examined during the data collection and analysis processes. What follows is a discussion of some of the themes, concepts and terms that frequently pervaded much of the text on HIV/AIDS education in the material resources that were consulted.

“*Sexuality*” and “*Sex*” were two concepts that featured in several of the textbooks pertaining to HIV/AIDS, as well as in the National and School Policy on HIV/AIDS. Noting the differences between these two concepts and critically examining, the manner in which these manifest themselves in practice, were challenges that also presented themselves in these documents. It is for these reasons that I choose to include these concepts as part of my study.

The confusion between the terms “*Sexuality Education*” and “*Sex Information*” frequently arose in textbooks used in HIV/AIDS Education. Special mention is also made of these terms in the policies mentioned above. Any misunderstanding created as a result of such confusion, is bound to have repercussions on the way educators and learners perceive these terms and ultimately on the process of making meaning. My study expanded on the terms by gaining insight into how the participants perceived these. The possible influence of the participants interpretations on the learning activities within the classroom context were also explored in light of their relation to the process of creating understanding among learners

The term “*abstinence*” came under much introspection in this study, as did the term “*promiscuous*”. Both these feature prominently in The National policy on HIV/AIDS (1999); The HIV/AIDS Emergency Guidelines for Educators and in The School Policy on HIV/AIDS Education. The difficulties associated with depicting these terms were explored in terms of how these were understood by the participants, and how this understanding translated into practice within the classroom setting.

The manner in which the themes, terms and concepts mentioned above manifest themselves in the classroom context, as evident in the way educators communicate within the domain of HIV/AIDS education, presents itself throughout this chapter. In addition, the way these terms and concepts are represented visually and through text are revisited and elaborated upon in the ensuing sections, indicative of the fact that document analysis was an ongoing activity in this research project. This discussion follows a thematic based approach.

4.4.3 Knowledge of and Engagement with Policies Pertaining to HIV/AIDS

Education

Teachers Y and Z claimed that they had a fairly accurate grasp of the National Policy on HIV/AIDS for Learners and Educators in Public Schools (1999) and its' implications for classroom practice. Teacher X acknowledged the existence of this policy, but admitted that she had not engaged with the policy on a personal level. As regards the school policy, all three educators admitted to knowing of the existence of the policy. Only Educator Y professed to having an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the document, as a result of being involved in the formulation of this policy himself. Teacher Z stated that the school policy was merely a paraphrase of the National Policy on HIV/AIDS- "*a waste of paper*" she added. An excerpt from the school's policy on HIV/AIDS can be found in the Appendix section of this dissertation (Refer to Appendix: 5). With regard to her sentiments on the school policy, Teacher X expressed the need for assistance as the statement that follows reveals.

"What we need, are practical suggestions as to how to implement this policy at classroom level with the learners, and how to make it work for us." (Educator X)

According to both level one educators, the policies could only be used on the school premises, making access to these documents fairly limited within school and unavailable to educators outside school. Due to time constraints, teachers were unable to engage meaningfully with these policies because of the restrictions on the availability of these documents. Meeting the expectations of these policies, was hence, left to chance, or done incidentally.

“The way I see it, is that we need to identify core issues relating to the HIV/AIDS discourse”, and work on formulating learning programmes around these. However, the relevant support structures, for example guidance on how to design and structure lessons on controversial topics such as ‘Safer Sexual Practices’, to assist in this process, are non-existent. If these do exist, we are not aware of them” (Teacher Z).

Teacher X admitted to requiring assistance, in the interpretation of these policies and, in the translation of its’ broader aims into attainable outcomes that can find application within the classroom context, whilst at the same time being relevant to learners.

It is clear from the data presented above that there were numerous restrictions placed on the availability and use of policy documents pertaining to HIV/AIDS, to educators. As highlighted by Teacher Z, there was a lack of support structures in place for development among teachers at the school in HIV/AIDS education. Also evident was the varying degrees of knowledge and understanding pertaining to policy documents amongst the three participants.

4.4.4. The Role of Training and Development in the Shaping of Understanding and in Informing Practice

Inadequate training for teachers is a barrier, as many educators do not have enough knowledge to teach about HIV/AIDS. Teachers are not properly trained to organize classroom activities on sensitive issues. The levels of training received by each of the three participants in the study, was discussed in their respective profiles addressed above in section 4.3, above.

Teacher X, having received no formal training in HIV/AIDS education, claimed that this impacted radically on her classroom practice. She found herself in a situation where it became difficult to ascertain the depth and scope of information that she should engage her learners with, especially in terms of how to go about discussing sensitive issues within the HIV/AIDS discourse. In an attempt to deal with this, she employed the extensive use of traditional teaching methods, such as the “teacher talk” method.

Teacher Y, on the other hand, having being for extensive training and having attended numerous workshops, both on how to go about administering HIV/AIDS education for primary school learners and how to manage HIV/AIDS education initiatives at school level, felt that he was in a better position to employ various teaching strategies, and experiment with these within the classroom context.

He claimed that as a result of his intensive training sessions and experience in teaching Life Orientation, since it’s inception within the outcomes-based curriculum, he was better equipped to ascertain which concepts and terms posed particular problems for learners at different age groups. Some examples, cited by him as being particularly problematic, were the notions of “*safe sex*” and that of “*abstinence.*”

He attributed the problems experienced in this regard, to cultural and language barriers. He believed that his training not only helped, to enhance the manner in which he engaged in discussion about HIV/AIDS, but also assisted in giving perspective to the manner in which he reflected upon, and made any remediation to his lessons.

Teacher Z, having received some formal training in HIV/AIDS education, admitted to still experiencing difficulties in communicating about certain controversial and sensitive issues, pertaining to HIV/AIDS. However her training had assisted her in attaining, to some extent, a degree of comfort in dealing with controversial issues surrounding the HIV/AIDS discourse.

The teacher transmission mode of instruction still dominated much of her lessons. She allowed for questions at the end of each lesson. Responses to these were confined to what was “necessary”, according to her judgment. Explanations were concise and to the point. She claimed that having attended a series of workshops on HIV/AIDS education, the negative notions that she had previously attached to HIV/AIDS, had begun to come under much introspection.

“It made me realize that not all people infected with HIV/AIDS are promiscuous and unhygienic. We need to make our learners see this” (Teacher Z).

The discussion above highlighted the varying degree of knowledge among the participants resulting in varying teaching styles. Those teachers who showed a more involved and advanced understanding of terms and concepts associated with HIV/AIDS , of which teacher Y can be cited as an example, were more comfortable and open to using various teaching strategies. Teacher X who represented educators who feel that they have limited knowledge and engagement with HIV/AIDS education, tend to use teacher- dominated lesson strategies. Also evident, was the fact that the varying degrees of knowledge and engagement with HIV/AIDS education among the participants influenced what information was presented to the learners. Finally the training received by the participants began to influence their own perceptions and understanding about HIV/AIDS education, causing them to reassess the meanings they gave to concepts and terms associated with HIV/AIDS.

4.4.5. The Accessibility of Material Resources and their Role in Creating Meaning and Understanding

Life Orientation textbooks were used in the execution of lessons. Within the textbooks themselves, there would be a module, or two, covering HIV/AIDS. These were the major sources from which worksheets were developed, and material resources produced, by all three educators. The school purchased Life Orientation textbooks annually. Each set came with an Educator's guide and a Learner's textbook. These were given to the Life Orientation educators across the different grades.

“The visual representations depicted in these textbooks are misleading and depict certain actions in a specific light. For example, when promoting abstinence, the act of sex is typically crossed out, depicting sexual relations as something that is wrong and dirty. Even though we do not want to promote sexual activity among our learners, one may raise the concern of sexual relations being misrepresented in these illustrations” (Teacher Y).

He added that:

“This is a typical example of visual images not sending out the intended messages. If supported with the correct information that sexual activity is a beautiful experience, between two people who love, care for, and understand each other, and who realize that with entering such a relationship, comes numerous possible consequences, learners can be equipped with the necessary skills to make informed and responsible decisions.”(TeacherY)

Teacher X believed that subjecting learners to some of the visual aids in the Life Orientation learners’ booklets, was a way of exposing them to “unnecessary and inappropriate information”, as they were far too explicit and provided too much of detail regarding how sexual acts are performed. She believed that it was “safer” to exclude these images from the worksheets that were produced. Regarding the use of related scientific knowledge, she believed that it was way too advanced for learners at primary school level. Often, she had to write the meaning of these words on the board, which learners then copiously took down. Frequently, they were unable to attach any meaning to these words.

Teacher Z believed that it was necessary to expose learners to visual images associated with certain terms, such as, a cross over pictures depicting sexual activity, to symbolize “abstinence.”

“Too often, we speak of abstinence during our lessons, but learners don’t really know what this means. By representing these meanings pictorially, learners are able to create meaning through their visual senses. It drives the message home.”(Teacher Z).

According to semiotics, as elaborated upon in chapter two of this dissertation, every sign is made up of a signifier (the form a sign takes) and the signified (the concept it represents). If we critically examine the way in which “*abstinence*” was represented in the above case, it is evident that an image of condemnation was conjured up to make learners believe that such an act is inappropriate. This immediately promotes a negative attitude towards sexual activity. By strategically placing a cross over pictures representing sexual activity, it is suggested that sexual activity is wrong and unacceptable under any circumstance. *“Is this the misconception that educators wish to create among their learners? Are they completely oblivious to the fact that, in trying to actively promote abstinence among their learners, they are contributing to the many misconceptions and inaccuracies that permeate much of the discussion on HIV/AIDS?”*

The discussion above produced evidence of material resources and textbooks pertaining to HIV/AIDS education being made available to the participants. The participants differed in their views on the suitability, of these resources and textbooks, to learners. Teacher X believed that the terminology used in these texts, were too advanced for these learners and needed greater clarification. Consequently, this negatively influenced the process of making meaning of terms and concepts associated with HIV/AIDS among learners.

As regards the visual images presented in the textbooks, teacher X believed that these were inappropriate for primary school learners and should therefore be excluded from material resources presented to learners. Teacher Y felt that the visual images portrayed in these textbooks often contradicted the intended messages, giving rise to many misconceptions and ambiguities among learners. Conversely, teacher Z believed that the pictorial representations in the textbooks helped to reinforce the intended messages and therefore served to enhance understanding among learners.

4.4.6. Defining and Representing HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS education provided at school level, often deals only with medical and biological facts, and not with the real life situations that young people find themselves in. To exacerbate matters even further, the notion of AIDS as a “nexus of meanings”, as described by Treicchler (1988), has enormous implications for the way in which educators engage in dialogue and discussion about HIV/AIDS.

Teacher X admitted to using a somewhat “scientific approach” in her lessons, as she believed this helped, to alleviate some of the difficulties, with having to discuss the “awkward” topics, such as “sex” and issues surrounding sexual relations.

“By keeping the lessons purely scientific, no one can point a finger at me, with regard to promoting promiscuous behaviour among children” (Teacher X).

The above sentiments are congruent to what Schostak (1993) termed “forbidden discourse”. According to him, this is the use of a specialized language that is historically and culturally produced. Discourses, encompassing the topic of sex, fall within this domain.

In this regard, Teacher Y felt differently and expressed his sentiments by saying that:

“Children have no conception of what we are talking about, when we are rigid and scientific in our approach. They need to relate these terms and concepts to experiences that are meaningful to them and that bear relation to what they hold as being significant. Talking about abstract words that supposedly string together to form a sentence, but have no meaning to the learners, defeats the entire purpose and objectives of HIV/AIDS education”(Teacher Y).

Teacher Y’s sentiments support those of Kupiers (1989), who believes that any discourse needs to be contextualized, so as to attach meaning to the message that is being conveyed.

Teacher Z admitted to having resorted, to the use of “purely scientific based lessons” at times. She claimed that issues surrounding the act of sex pose particular problems for her. That is the area, where she found the need to use only “biological and scientific terms”, to convey meaning.

Lessons surrounding the theme of formulating meaningful relationships outside the domain of sex was an area where she felt it was necessary to spend more time , and this was where she was able to incorporate learners’ real life situations and circumstances. In addition, she encouraged discussion and responses from learners when dealing with such themes, as she expressed a degree of comfort with exploring these topics with learners.

What emerged clearly from the above discussion is the fact that medical and scientific terminology that are not relevant and localized to many of the learners, dominate much of the discussion and dialogue within HIV/AIDS education. In addition there are certain awkward controversial topics that lend themselves well to a scientific approach, whilst others did not. This was the viewpoint expressed by teacher Z. Teacher X resorted to a scientific-based approach in her lessons as a “*safety net*”, so as to prevent blame and accusation being cast upon her for promoting promiscuity among learners. Teacher Y felt differently asserting that biological and medical definitions of HIV/AIDS that were abstract and irrelevant to the learners’ real life situations did not necessarily give rise to understanding among learners.

4.4.7. The Problematic Nature of Assumptions in the Process of Creating Meaning and Understanding

“Many primary school educators are under the false impression that their learners are not sexually active” (Teacher Y).

According to Teacher Y, assumptions like the one quoted above give rise to “*a false sense of hope*” among teachers, as these continue to perpetuate ignorance about the consequences of such activity among learners. He was of the belief that such false perceptions of their learners’ sexual profiles creates a feeling among educators, that it is not necessary to explore themes and issues pertaining to sexual relations within the classroom context. Such assumptions are dangerous, as they run the risk of learners continuing to engage in unsafe sexual practices.

Teacher X believed that the assumption that learners are too young to be exposed to any form of HIV/AIDS education, is problematic for a variety of reasons. Statistics reveal that the age of sexual debut amongst children, is becoming increasingly earlier. Also, the National Policy on HIV/AIDS (1999) stipulates that age-appropriate HIV/AIDS education should be provided for all learners.

Teacher Z contended that the assumptions that teachers bring with them to the classroom, have a definite bearing on the way in which they engage with their learners on discussion and dialogue about HIV/AIDS.

“Take me for example. Islam prohibits any form of sexual activity outside the realm of marriage. Coming from this background, there is no question in my mind that it is wrong for children to engage in sexual activity. This line of thinking certainly impacts on the way I speak and respond in the classroom context. I want the learners to know that it is wrong for them to engage in sexual relations, which is why I harp on abstinence” (Teacher Z).

This bears testimony to the fact that one’s predispositions and preconceived notions, of what they believe to be acceptable and age-appropriate, certainly impacts on the meanings that are conveyed within the classroom context. The assumption by teachers, that learners are not sexually active, had enormous implications for the selection of topics that were covered within the domain of HIV/AIDS, as well as on the approach that teachers employed in the execution of their lessons.

This once again highlighted evidence of the dominant ideology present within the classroom context, emanating from the teachers. Also evident was the fact that the teachers' beliefs, about what was sexually appropriate and inappropriate for children, influenced the selection of topics within the realm of HIV/AIDS education. In addition the way in which HIV/AIDS education was presented to learners, was influenced by the various ideologies and assumptions of the teachers. This supports Totto's (1999) view that the process of meaning making can never be value-free or neutral.

4.4.8. Ambiguous Terms within the HIV/AIDS Discourse

The terms "Sex" and "Sexuality" commonly pose problems. They tend to be used inter-changeably. Many learners and educators use them synonymously. According to Van Rooyen and Louw (1994), sex refers to the act of sexual intercourse and, sexuality is a wider concept, referring to who we are as males and females, the way we dress, our behaviour, attitudes and relationships.

Teacher X stated that even though these terms are explained in the glossary section of many texts, the confusion between these two terms still prevails. She added that theoretical explanations existed, but practical examples, to support these, were not always there.

"It is even more difficult, for us teachers, to verbalize and explain to learner the difference between these two. If we choose to use practical examples to illustrate the differences between these two, these are limited in that, our understanding of such examples and how they are related to the terms being discussed, are influenced by our own cultural dispositions and experiences. The notion of a 'shared meaning' or a 'common understanding' arising becomes particularly problematic in this regard" (Teacher Y).

To illustrate the difference between the two terms, teacher Z used a spider diagram, where she wrote the heading “Sexuality” on the middle of the chalkboard and asked learners what they understood by the word. These were recorded as ideas emerging from the central theme. The teacher started by offering a definition herself:

“It includes our sexual thoughts, our experiences, our feelings, our ideas and our values. It has to do with our entire self as a girl or boy, man or woman and includes things like the way we dress, move and speak. It is much more than sex. What do you all think sexuality is?” (She looked up at the class all expectantly waiting for a response)

“I think it is when boys think about girls and girls think about boys” (The response of a male learner in the class).

“You are partially correct” (Teacher’s response and she repeated her definition offered above).

The educator was clearly, uncomfortable, with learners having any thoughts about the opposite sex. When questioned about why she brushed off the learner, she said that encouraging such responses, would lead to the lesson, diverging from its intended course, and instead, would have led to other discussions pertaining to feelings about the opposite sex.

The terms “Sexuality Education” and “sex information” were also used synonymously, further intensifying the resistance offered and the negative light in which HIV/AIDS preventative education initiatives were construed. Teachers were reluctant to transmit information about the act of sex, as they believe this would contribute to promiscuous behaviours among their learners. In order to avoid the blame being cast onto them, they minimized the use of, or eliminated, such information from their lessons, altogether.

According to Van Rooyen and Louw (1994), sex information is where a child is given information without guidance or values or norms. On the other hand, they (Van Rooyen and Louw; 1994), contend that sexuality education includes information about sex, but in addition, encompasses values, norms and skills being taught. Since the latter is indicative of being embedded in values, the questions of whose values are given precedence, and to what extent these are congruent with the value systems of the learners, become inevitable. The process of making meaning can never be completely divorced from values.

The notion of “safe sex” was also viewed, as problematic, by all three educators.

“No sex with a partner is ever completely risk free, even when using a condom, which can greatly reduce but never fully eliminate the risk” (Teacher Y).

This was the reason cited by educators X and Z, for not engaging in extensive discussion on the act of sex. Teacher Y contended that whilst this may be true, it becomes even more necessary for educators to spread this message. Issues pertaining to sexual acts need to be addressed in this light.

The term “promiscuous” was also considered as being a huge bone of contention among the three participants. Teacher Y felt that the term has negative connotations attached to it and is judgmental, accusatory and derogatory. He advocated the use of the term “multiple partners” instead. Teacher X believed that presenting the term “promiscuous” to learners, helped them rethink whether or not it was appropriate to engage in such behaviours.

Teacher Z also preferred the use of the term “promiscuous”, adding that learners need to be presented with the “*hard core facts*”. By downplaying the repercussions of having more than one sexual partner, she believed that educators are contributing to learners’ decisions to become sexually active.

The use of the terms “Sex” and “Sexuality” as being synonymous proved to be problematic, as did the use of the terms “Sexuality Education” and “Sex Information”. Using these terms interchangeably created much ambiguity among both educators and learners. The confusion in meaning with regard as to what constituted “safe sex” and whether or not any sexual activity is completely safe, came under much introspection. The negative connotations attached to the term, “promiscuous” was also highlighted. A preferred substitute, that being “having multiple partners”, was advocated instead. This supports the idea that how educators communicate about HIV/AIDS within the classroom context exerts a significant influence on the way learners perceive the terms and concepts being presented to them, and ultimately, on the process of making meaning. The idea that certain terms within the discourse on HIV/AIDS leave themselves being open to various interpretations poses many challenges.

“Whose interpretation is more acceptable? How do the dominant ideologies that operate within the school context influence discourse on HIV/AIDS? How do these dominant ideologies manifest themselves within the classroom context?” These are some of the considerations that teachers need to bear in mind when they communicate about HIV/AIDS.

4.4.9. Use of Metaphors within the HIV/AIDS Discourse

“I admit that I sometimes talk around the topic, especially when dealing with sensitive topics like, condom use, masturbation as a healthy alternative, just to mention but a few” (Teacher Y).

Teacher Z feels that using metaphors is like “*masking*” pertinent issues within the HIV/AIDS discourse and he believes that this can give rise to all sorts of misconceptions. He illustrated his sentiments with the example that follows:

“To die of AIDS” conjures up the notion that AIDS is a disease. This is not true. AIDS is a syndrome or a group of illnesses, resulting from a weakening of the immune system. This weakening is caused by HIV, and opens the body to “opportunistic” diseases – that is illnesses that take advantage of weak immunity. Referring to AIDS as a “scourge or plague” implies that HIV/AIDS can be controlled. These are sensational terms that fuel panic, discrimination and hopelessness. Even the use of the term “innocent victim” is problematic for me” (Teacher Z).

“If you do not be careful you too could become an innocent victim”, warned teacher X. The implication is that somebody else is guilty of something wrong, which may not necessarily be the case. This is yet another example that illustrates the deliberate choice of signs (language) on the part of the educator, to represent HIV and AIDS (the signified).

This is in accordance with Pliskin (1997) who believes that as a result of the lack of language with which to discuss sexually transmitted diseases, talking around the topic is a common feature within the classroom context. “Selective teaching” is what occurs instead. The result can be disastrous, as has been indicated and documented, where such an approach leaves itself open to giving rise to, and perpetuating the many misconceptions and inaccuracies that permeate much of the discussion on HIV/AIDS within the school context. *“Does selective teaching give rise to gaps in knowledge among learners? Who decides which topics should be given precedence over others?”* These questions are indicative of the various power relations that dominate much of the dialogue and discussion pertaining to HIV/AIDS within the classroom context. The educator, in his or her supposed position of authority over the learners, selected the subject content as well as the learning activities. *“What impact does this have on the way HIV/AIDS education is presented within the classroom context?”*

4.4.10. The Role of the Media in Defining Sexual Behaviour

“The media exerts an ever-pervasive influence on the way we engage in discussion on HIV/AIDS” (Teacher Y)

Teacher X also acknowledged the instrumental role of the media on the way educators and learners speak about HIV/AIDS, adding that on the one hand sexual acts are portrayed as pleasure-giving and sensationalized on television, and on the other hand the image presented of HIV/AIDS in the newspapers and television news, is one of “gloom and doom”. She asserted that such an antithesis, presents enormous problems within the classroom context.

“Only one option in terms of sexual behaviour is offered within the classroom context, namely that of abstinence, regardless of the age of students. This causes much confusion among learners. Here we are asking them to delay intercourse, but they are constantly being bombarded with positive and pleasure-giving images of sexual relations on television, at malls, over the internet and through various other forms of media.” The problem is intensified when learners are faced with peer pressure” (Teacher Z).

The competing influence of the media runs counter to the message that educators are trying to portray. Clearly the dangers of engaging in risky sexual practices, as well as the promotion of safer sexual practices and the delaying of sexual relationships altogether, fall within the domain of HIV/AIDS education. By sensationalizing the act of sexual relations and not necessarily presenting the risk factors involved in such practices, the messages being sent out by the media are in conflict with those presented within the realm of HIV/AIDS education. The issue of how to effectively counter these images becomes a burning issue among educators.

By merely preaching about *“Abstinence as the only option”*, the possibilities of learners being presented with other alternatives such as safe sexual practices is being ignored altogether. The failure to take into consideration the possibility that some learners may already be sexually active could have major repercussions, such as the continued practice of unsafe and risky sexual activity.

The issue of power relations is raised once again. *“Do the values promoted in the context of HIV/AIDS education override or take a backseat to those typically portrayed by the media? How does this antithesis among the two manifest itself within the classroom? To what extent does the educator acknowledge this contrast and how does he or she attempt to address the issue in an attempt to support the intended outcomes of HIV/AIDS education.*

4.4.11. “Context Embedded” versus “Context Reduced” Communication and the Problem with using Western Culture to Define African Sexual Behaviour

According to Baker, in Walsh (1996), “context embedded” communication utilizes a range of paralinguistic cues, such as body language to support verbal cues, and encompasses a situation where learners can actively negotiate meaning, whereas context-reduced communication relies on very few cues to convey meaning. The latter relies chiefly on linguistic cues to create meaning, and may even include suspending knowledge in the real world in order to manipulate the logic of the message. This includes a cognitively demanding situation, where information must be processed quickly, without accompanying situational cues.

Both teachers X and Z employed extensive use, of linguistic cues to convey meaning and understanding. This was evident, by the fact that the “teacher talk” mode of instruction permeated much of their lessons. The fact that both of these educators were set on promoting “abstinence” among their learners made them emphasize issues relating to refraining from any form of sexual activity, as opposed to acknowledging the possibility, that many learners may be sexually active, and therefore it might have been necessary to focus on safe sexual practices as well. Issues pertaining to safe sexual practices, including condom usage, were not even mentioned during the course of the lessons observed.

Also the fact that teacher X progressed with her lessons in a manner that required learners to “take in” an abundance of facts, including new terminology relating to the topic at hand, bears evidence of context-reduced communication being primarily used. Little opportunity was provided to relate these issues to the everyday experiences of the learners.

The notion that the meanings derived from signs (language) will differ from context to context and from interpretation to interpretation, is of significance here. The failure to take into consideration that “*abstinence*” may be defined differently in different contexts and ignoring the possibility that the whole notion of abstaining from sexual activity may not be the “*shared ideal*”, cross-culturally, has far-reaching consequences.

In the multi-cultural classroom, this can result in the message that educators are trying to convey, being contradictory to the dictates of the different cultures present. This is in line with the sentiments of Eco, in Dellinger (1995), who asserts that differences in ideological make-up, of any audience in terms of ethical, religious, and psychological points of view, as well as tastes, values and preferences inevitably leads to some sort of misunderstanding or gap, especially under those circumstances where one culture comes into contact with another.

On the contrary, teacher Y had made numerous attempts to incorporate the experiences and views of learners within the lessons themselves. This was evident in his body language and the questions that he posed. He actually brought a female and a male condom, to show learners what each of these looked like. In addition, he handed out bilingual pamphlets, containing instructions in English and Zulu, on how to use male and female condoms. When questioned about the rationale behind this, he responded by saying:

“The sad reality is that many of our learners are sexually active. To ignore this fact is to delude ourselves. We need to equip these learners with the knowledge and skills to make use of safer sexual practices. Merely telling them not to engage in sexual practices serves little or no purpose. Many girls and boys admitted that they never knew of the existence of a female condom or what it looked like. That is why I brought a sample in to show them.” (Teacher Y)

He also claimed that pictorial representations were more visually stimulating, and served to enhance understanding. This is why he distributed pamphlets, containing information and diagrams, in many of the learners' mother tongue language. This is in line with the thinking of Mercer (1995), who believes that knowledge is produced and disseminated in the context of application.

Teacher Y believed that the learners' experiences need to be taken into account when planning lessons in HIV/AIDS education. Teachers X and Z believed that merely cascading information verbally to learners was sufficient to promote understanding among learners. The presentation of abstract, scientific information to learners did not incorporate the experiences of the learners in the lessons of teachers X and Z. Visual stimuli, such as pictures, did promote understanding among learners, as did the fact that materials given to them were printed in their mother tongue. This highlights the fact that language barriers can hamper the process of making meaning and creating understanding. The disjunction in language competencies between the educators and learners did exert a strong influence on the way learners perceived the information that was presented to them, as was evident in the above discussion.

The assumptions by teachers X and Z that learners respond more positively to teacher-dominated lessons clearly influenced their teaching approaches. This was evident in teacher Z's remark.

"HIV/AIDS education is relatively new within the school context. Learners need to be made aware of the correct terminology, irrespective of whether they may seem overly scientific or not. Since learners are not familiar with the new subject matter, the teacher needs to cascade the relevant information to them, even if this means the teacher does most of the talking" (Teacher Z).

Assumptions like the one above run the risk of lessons continuing to be teacher-dominated, without taking the learners previous knowledge and experiences into account. One has to question the influence that such assumptions have on the processes involved in imparting knowledge to create meaning and enhance understanding among learners.

4.4.12. The Use of Non-verbal Communication to Create Meaning and Understanding

“Psychoanalysis teaches one to be skeptical of what a man says, because his words usually reveal, at best, only his consciousness; and to read between the lines, to listen with the ‘third ear’, to read his face, his gestures, and every expression of his body” (Cohen and Manion; 1994: 181).

If we take the sentiments expressed above into account, it becomes necessary to acknowledge the influence of non-verbal language on the processes involved in creating meaning and understanding.

Teacher Y frequently made use of eye contact and paused, where the situation necessitated this. By pausing, he claimed that he was able to take a moment or two, to “read the learners’ facial expressions”. He claimed that as a result of knowing his pupils well, he was able to ascertain whether or not they were experiencing difficulty in comprehending what was being said.

An example cited by him was the issue pertaining to female condoms. The very mention of the existence of “female condoms”, created facial expressions of puzzlement among many of the learners, and teacher Y was able to read into those expressions. This made him bring in a sample of the condom the very next day. This once again alludes to the importance of signs and suggestions in creating meaning and understanding. By reading into the facial expressions of learners, teacher Y was able to pick up on the fact that some learners had never seen a female condom before, so to enhance the meaning-making process he brought a female condom to class the following day.

Teacher X failed to meet the gaze of any of her pupils during the course of her lessons. When questioned about why this was the case, she retaliated by saying that she was embarrassed about discussing issues pertaining to sexual relations with children. She was certainly oblivious to the blank stares that were evident among many of the learners, especially when she used terms such as, ‘*promiscuous*’ and ‘*heterosexual*’. The lesson was teacher-dominated and the teaching method used was the verbal transmission method.

Any signals or cues that pointed to possible misunderstandings were not taken notice of. This can be construed as representing what Hall, in Dellinger (1995) terms “*implicit culture*”, which refers to the things that one takes for granted. The educator concerned took the silence of the class to signify understanding. Perhaps in the educator’s culture, silence represents understanding. This is not necessarily a universal representation of silence. Silence could imply fear to respond or pose a question, or an array of other meanings. The silence and blank stares of the learners could hence be open to multiple interpretations.

Repetition was frequently used by teacher Z. She claimed that this served to enhance understanding by clarifying what was implied. The term she used was “*to drive the point home.*” This educator frequently repeated the term “*abstinence*”, reiterating that it was morally improper, for learners to engage in any sexual activity, and the best option was not to practice any form of sexual activity whatsoever. Her authoritarian approach was evident, in her high pitched voice, and her commanding tone. Once again, the verbal transmission method of teaching where the teacher dominates the lesson was evident.

The issue of power relations could be raised here, as the positions of power and authority of the teacher received precedence over any other factor that might have influenced the learning activities within the classroom context. When questioned about this, teacher Z stated that she felt that it was necessary for educators to be explicit in what they meant and stand firm in the message that they were trying to convey. This bears testimony to the fact that the educators' preconceived notions of what should be emphasized to the learner's influences the approach that he or she chooses to use in his or her lessons.

The arbitrary nature of the relationship between the form the sign takes and the concept it represents, as advocated by semiotics, is evident here. The way one chooses to represent a concept is a deliberate attempt to create a specific meaning or convey a particular message. In this case, it was the promotion of abstinence over any form of sexual activity. This is indicative of signs and suggestions being employed to serve a particular function or purpose.

4.4.13. The Notion of a “Shared Understanding” versus that of “Multiple Meanings”

Teacher X believed that a “shared understanding”, within the HIV/AIDS discourse is not possible. She believed that cultural barriers make it “impossible” for such a state to be achieved. Teacher Y believed that a degree of shared understanding is possible. He asserted that there are certain core terms and concepts that are “universal” in their meaning, whilst others are “culture specific”. He elaborated and expanded upon this broad statement, by means of an example, and by introducing the term “*Ghetto Language*”.

“The great majority of our learners come from the township areas, where the scientific terms that we (educators) use to convey meaning and understanding about HIV/AIDS within the classroom context, are not even heard of. Instead these learners use other less eloquent terms, to refer to sexual acts and sexually transmitted and related diseases. The commonly employed “Ghetto Language” is something that many educators are not familiar with, so they resort to using the scientific terms that are often cited in literature pertaining to HIV/AIDS” (Teacher Y).

Examples of terms that were cited as falling within the domain of “Ghetto Language” were “*dirty blood*” for HIV infected blood and someone who goes “*bed-hopping*” for a person who has multiple sexual partners.

If the above sentiments are acknowledged and accepted, it becomes imperative that the possibility of there being multiple meanings, attached to a specific term or concept within the HIV/AIDS discourse, be explored in detail. The distinct differences in language competencies and the disjunction between learners and educators, in terms of culture, experience, world-views, just to mention but a few, sets the stage for numerous interpretations to be established. This is in accordance with Brown (1990), who states that the culture in which we live is not one culture, but many, each with its own values, customs, and so on, and each should be honored as valid and as valuable as our own.

Further, Hall, in Dellinger (1995) adds that the process of assigning meaning to concepts is defined according to the dictates and the needs of different cultures. The implication is that meaning is negotiated within a context, as advocated by semiotics. The way a sign (language) is constructed to represent the signified (the concept being illustrated) is influenced by contextual factors.

The disjunction in language between the teachers and learners exacerbates matters, as this ultimately influences the process of meaning-making among learners. In addition, the differences in language competencies between the educators and the learners have a bearing on facilitating understanding among learners, as was highlighted in the discussion above.

4.4.14. Power Relations and Its' Influence within the HIV/AIDS Discourse

According to Pica, in Brindley (1994), unequal relationships between the teacher and learner in the classroom contribute to the difficulty that learners face in learning new subject matter and terminology. The unequal status inhibits successful second language comprehension, production, and ultimately acquisition. She adds that in the interaction between teacher and learner, there must be constant modification and restructuring of what is said, so that a shared understanding can be reached. The implication is that restructuring and modification of production, lead to mutual comprehension.

“When the status relationship is unequal, moves to restructure interaction toward mutual comprehension may be perceived as threats to the [teacher] ... Given the unequal status between teacher and student established by the design and organization of classroom activities, students may begin to feel that their clarification requests and confirmation checks will be perceived as challenges to the knowledge and professional experience of the teacher. Given these conditions, moves to restructure classroom interaction, could reverse the status relationships in the classroom, and thereby place the student in a position of power and authority, over the teacher” (Pica, in Brindley; 1994: 161).

The fact that the entire class nodded whenever teachers X and Z asked if they understood is clearly a demonstration of the above sentiments. Seldom, if ever, did learners pose questions in these lessons. In turn, both educators took this as being indicative of the fact that learners understood what was being said, and used this as a sign to progress to the next stage of the lesson. To these educators the absence of questions represented understanding on the part of learners. *“Is it safe to assume that silence and the nodding of heads represent understanding, or does this signify blind acceptance of what is being presented, perhaps even conformity to authority?”* These considerations give rise to the notion of multiple interpretations of signs and suggestions being possible, as reflected in semiotics.

“If learners don’t raise any questions, or concerns, I assume that it is safe to continue with the rest of the lesson.” (Teacher X)

Teacher Z believed that learners need to display to him, both verbally and non-verbally, that they understand any new information presented to them, before he can proceed to the next stage of the lesson.

“Learners are comfortable enough to ask me questions and to express their lack of understanding. I often tell them that although I am an educator and significantly older than them, they should feel free to do so. I make it clear that we are all involved in an on-going process of learning, and that even I, can learn from them. Take for example the commonly employed terms that relate to the discourse on HIV/AIDS and exist within the so-called ‘Ghetto’ culture.” (Teacher Y)

Teacher Z contends that many learners are afraid to ask so-called “awkward” questions, such as, *“Is oral sexual relations a safer option with regard to HIV/AIDS transmission, or How can I get help if I suspect that I am HIV positive?”* She adds that the traditional boundaries and hierarchies that exist within the classroom context contribute to the fears that learners display in posing questions, as they see this as challenging the teacher’s authority and knowledge. This once again alludes to the notion that the dominant power relations within the classroom influence the manner in which educators communicate about HIV/AIDS.

4.4.15. The Implications of Multicultural Classrooms for the Creation of a “Shared Understanding”

Of significance here, is the fact that communication occurs on different levels. One such example is communication that occurs on a cultural level. According to Smit (1999), this is when people base their own communication behaviours on characteristics of their own culture or subculture, for example, beliefs, habits, customs and language.

“Here we are trying to persuade learners to practice abstinence, and yet, the majority of our learners come from cultural backgrounds that run counter to this. I was once told by a Black learner that it is customary within certain African indigenous cultures, for a man to engage in sexual relations with his prospective wife prior to marriage, to test if she is capable of conceiving a child or not. Certainly this runs counter to the whole notion of abstinence.” (Teacher X)

Teachers X and Z admitted that they were not fully acquainted with cultures other than their own, and both saw this as a limitation in attaining an optimal level of “*shared understanding*” among their multicultural learners. Even though both educators had a basal level of communicative skills within the Zulu language, both contended that this was confined to giving basic instructions, and understanding basic sentence structures used by isiZulu speaking learners. This was termed by them, as “*Kitchen Zulu*”.

“My own interpretation of what it means to practice ‘abstinence’, for example, may be totally different from the learners’ understanding of the same term. Whose to say that my understanding of this term and its’ implications for defining and governing sexual conduct, is any more acceptable than those of the different cultural groups of learners, that constitute the learning situation, with which I am confronted?”
(Teacher Z)

Vermeulen, in Walsh (1996) contends that all utterances, representations and texts are grounded in a field of cultural codes. Furthermore, most cultural codes imply value judgments which may be implicitly or explicitly evident. Explicit culture, according to Hall, in Dellinger (1995) presents itself as law, what people talk about, and can be specific about. Implicit culture is more complex in that it encompasses things such as feelings, what one takes for granted or what exists on the fringes of awareness. Each culture has its own way of classifying the world, implying that the dictates and needs of different cultures influence the process of assigning meaning to the various elements of the world.

Hence it follows that the meanings ascribed to terms such as “*abstinence*” and “*promiscuous*” are “*culture-specific*” and will therefore differ from context to context. This certainly has implications for the way in which learners within a multicultural context perceive the terms and concepts commonly associated with HIV/AIDS. *“How then is it possible to create a state of shared understanding within the discourse on HIV/AIDS? Is such a state possible or is it merely an idealistic and unrealistic goal?”*

“The very use of the term ‘promiscuous’ implies value judgments. We use the term to refer to people who carelessly and irresponsibly engage in sexual relations with many partners. This is problematic for a variety of reasons. Firstly, it implies using terms adopted from the Western World to define African sexual behaviours. The reality within the African context, is that many people are forced to engage in sexual relations with many partners, as a way of earning an income to support themselves and their families, and not because they simply desire to be ‘promiscuous’. Labeling them as such conjures up and creates negative perceptions of these people as individuals.”(Teacher Y)

If educators stop to take cognizance of the above sentiments, as expressed by the participants in the study, it becomes inevitable that they re-examine their own convictions (religious, cultural, moral, just to mention but a few), as they engage in discussion and dialogue within the HIV/AIDS discourse. The issue of whose cultural understandings take precedence in the multicultural classroom context, is raised. *Is it the Western ideology or the medical ideology, both of which are dominated with the text through the use of language and examples? Is it possible for educators to create a learning situation where all cultural beliefs are acknowledged and given equal status? How can this desired state be achieved and sustained so that people will not be ashamed in their cultural beliefs about how things work?*

The examples cited in the above discussion, of the terms “promiscuous” and “multiple partners”, are contaminated with derogatory connotations, and therefore regarded as negative. *How do we create the notion that being promiscuous or having multiple partners is not necessarily bad in our own cultural beliefs, but that having more than one partner is a reality?* Perhaps a shift in focus to identify safer sex measures and to practice these, would be a way forward.

4.4.16. Teaching Styles, Learning Activities and Assessment Procedures and the Manner in which these influence Meaning and Understanding

“Most classroom interaction is structured so that students can display to their teacher their knowledge and skills, whether this be in regard to a second language, subject matter, or a content area. The teacher is perceived as both language expert and evaluator. The students come to the classroom as subordinates, seeking the teacher’s expertise to guide and evaluate the progress of their learning. Decisions as to what knowledge and skills are to be displayed are therefore seldom within the student’s control, but are shaped, or unfortunately, at times constrained by the teacher’s elicitation and directives. Teachers are expected to follow up students’ display with commentary or correction” (Picca in, Brindley; 1994: 161).

In the classroom of Teacher X, learners were arranged in rows, with all learners facing the chalkboard. Teacher talk was the chief mode of instruction.

“Today, we are going to look at the ways in which a person can become infected with HIV”. (Opening remarks by Teacher X)

Learners were made to sit and listen, as the teacher explained the different ways in which one can contract HIV. The classroom environment was tense and uneasy, and this was evident by the learners sitting quietly, and staring blankly at the teacher in front. It was clear, that no learner had any intention of interrupting the normal chain of events that occurred, in the progression of lessons conducted by the teacher. Upon completion of her lesson, the teacher asked if everyone understood. They all nodded. She then put up notes on the chalkboard, which learners were expected to take down copiously, in their Life Orientation notebooks.

The lessons that followed on precautionary measures to be taken with regard to HIV/AIDS prevention, basically assumed the same approach. All information was presented verbally by the teacher, followed by notes on the chalkboard, which learners were expected to take down. Learners were expected to write a comprehensive test on subject matter covered, in the week that followed. Lessons were very much content-driven, with the assumption that learners had no previous knowledge of the subject matter covered. No attempt was made to contextualize the subject matter within the realm of the learners' experiences.

Teacher Y used group work in his lessons. Lessons incorporated two-way interaction. Learners were encouraged to ask questions. Learners were presented with pictures, depicting the ways in which HIV is transmitted. They were asked to form groups and, discuss and list the different ways in which the virus is spread, on the slip of paper handed to each group. This instruction was repeated, as well as written on the chalkboard. A class discussion ensued. The educator used the learners existing knowledge, as a starting point to build on his lesson.

There was clearly a relaxed classroom environment, and this was evident in the way in which learners were able to pose questions easily, and without restraint. They also responded to questions posed in a confident manner, even though they did not always have, in their possession, the appropriate vocabulary to do so.

“When a mother gives it to the baby, when it is inside her” (A learner’s response).

“Yes, that is correct- we refer to this as mother-to-child transmission” (He nodded and smiled before proceeding to write this on the chalkboard) responded teacher Y.

By using probes and encouraging the learners to respond to questions, he was able to ascertain what the learners already knew about HIV transmission. This served as building blocks to the lessons that were to follow, on precautions to be taken with regard to the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Teacher Z had her class arranged in rows. Even though teacher talk was a predominant feature of the way in which the lesson was presented, learners were comfortable enough to pose the occasional question or two. This was evident, by one male learner asking if there were any other ways in which one could contract HIV. Teacher Z explained to the learners how HIV can be contracted, with the aid of a chart, showing pictorial representations of what she was trying to say.

The follow up activity was a worksheet, which learners had to complete in class for assessment purposes. Learners were required to match pictorial representations of the ways in which HIV can be transmitted, with sentences that used the appropriate scientific terminology to describe the means of transmission. These included three major categories, namely “mother-to-child transmission; sexual intercourse or relations; and coming into contact with infected blood”. The assumption was that learners knew what the terms “intercourse” and “infected”, meant as these were not explained. The question that arose in my mind was:

“How much can learners assimilate in terms of language, especially if the lessons are teacher dominated?”

What emerged clearly from the above discussion was that teachers X and Z dominated the lessons. They assumed that learners had no previous knowledge about the ways in which HIV/AIDS can be transmitted, and their teaching approaches reflected this. Teacher Y, on the other hand did not make the same assumption, but instead used the learners’ existing knowledge as a starting point in his lessons. The opportunities he provided to learners to respond to questions, and to display their current understandings on the topic at hand bears testimony to this. The fact that learners were encouraged to attach meanings to the pictorial representations within a group context allowed for them to negotiate meaning and create a sense of *“shared understanding”*.

Educators preconceived notions of what children already know and what they should know, tended to influence their teaching styles and approaches within the classroom context. This bears evidence to the power relations that exist within the classroom context. It is the educator who decided what to teach and how to teach it. *“How can we create a culture of learning that promotes the optimal involvement of learners in the process of negotiating meaning thereby facilitating understanding, taking into account the differences in their language competencies, cultural backgrounds and belief systems? Is such a state an idealistic one or is it pre-requisite for enhancing learning within a multicultural context?”*

4.5 A Reflection on the Key Issues Presented in the Chapter

From the data presented above, it can be concluded that the availability and accessibility of the policy documents and material resources pertaining to HIV/AIDS played a vital role in the way educators engaged with these. This also influenced the way they interpreted and understood the terms and concepts that are commonly associated with HIV/AIDS. The fact that the educators were imposed with restrictions, with regard to the use of these documents, posed problems. The varying levels of knowledge and training of educators with regard to HIV/AIDS education did impact on their understanding of HIV/AIDS. This inevitably informed their teaching practices.

It was also evident that a disjunction, between the language competencies of the educators and that of the learners, exerted a significant influence on the process of making meaning among learners. In this study the educators used English as the medium of instruction whilst the majority of the learners were English second language learners. The criticisms leveled against the quality of the material resources used in the lessons, were that these were inadequate to meet the intended outcomes of HIV/AIDS education. Often, they sent out contradictory and conflicting messages that give rise to much ambiguity.

The scientific language that pervades much of the discussion on HIV/AIDS education was also preferred by two of the participants as a way of dealing with sensitive and controversial topics. The use of Western ideology to define Sexual behaviour was also a common practice among the participants.

Selective teaching, where the content of HIV/AIDS lessons were selected by the teachers, was also evident. This manifested itself in the use of metaphors to define and represent HIV/AIDS. The participants saw this as a way of working around the awkwardness with which they were confronted when dealing with controversial topics, such as sexual intercourse.

The assumptions that educators held about what was sexually appropriate and inappropriate for the learners, also influenced how they communicated about HIV/AIDS. In addition this impacted on their teaching styles, which were teacher dominated. The role of the media in defining sexual behaviour, and in shaping the understanding about HIV/AIDS among learners and educators, was also analyzed. The misconceptions, ambiguities and inaccuracies that arise as a result of one's engagement with the media, were also presented. Evidence of there being power relations in operation within the classroom context, were also presented. The dominant ideologies possessed by the educators manifested themselves in the top-down hierarchical approach used in the execution of their lessons.

The fact that the lessons were not embedded in experiences relevant to those of the learners came across clearly. The typically negative connotations attached to certain terms that feature within the discourse on HIV/AIDS posed problems, from a cultural perspective. The notion of the existence of multiple meanings being associated with HIV/AIDS was raised. The possibility of a "shared understanding" existing within a multicultural perspective was also explored.

The analysis of data in this chapter raised the following issues:

“How can the availability and accessibility of policy documents and material resources, pertaining to HIV/AIDS education to teachers be improved? What can be done about upgrading the educators’ knowledge and training on HIV/AIDS education? What are the assumptions that educators bring with them to the classroom? How can the effects of these assumptions on the process of making meaning among educators and learners be addressed? How can educators create a culture of learning that promotes the active involvement of learners in the process of making meaning within the context of HIV/AIDS education? To what extent can the learners’ experiences, cultural backgrounds and language competencies be accommodated within the HIV/AIDS education curriculum? What attempts can be made to address the disjunction in language competencies between the educators and teachers?”

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the presentation and detailed discussion of the findings of this research project. A thematic based approach illustrating the findings of the study, as well as a critique of these findings, in line with the literature consulted in the study, permeated much of the discussion in this second last chapter of the research report. The major conclusions that can be drawn from the study; recommendations in the light of these findings, the limitations of this study itself, as well suggestions for possible areas of extension of this research, are presented, as I now turn my attention to the final chapter of this dissertation.

CHAPTER: 5 – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

In this final chapter, the major conclusions drawn from this study are presented, as are recommendations in light of these conclusions. Due consideration is also given to the limitations of the study. Suggestions, in terms of possible areas of extension of the study, for research, are also offered.

5.2. A Brief Discussion on some of the Major Conclusions that can be drawn from this Study and Implications of these for Educators in their Classroom Practices

Clearly, what emerged from this study was that the level of understanding on the part of teachers and the meanings they attached to the terms and concepts commonly associated with HIV/AIDS, certainly impacted on the way in which they engaged in discussion and dialogue with their learners within the classroom context. The accessibility of and engagement with material resources relating to HIV/AIDS education influenced the meaning and understanding that the participants attached to related vocabulary. The training received also exerted an influence in this regard.

The notion of a “shared understanding” and the possibility of such an understanding, emerging within a multicultural context, came under introspection. The emergence of “multiple meanings” within the HIV/AIDS discourse is inevitable. The way in which individuals ascribe meaning and attach significance to some idea or concept, is largely influenced by contextual factors which differ from setting to setting.

The significance of “context-embedded”, as opposed to “context reduced” communication was highlighted in this regard. Due consideration needs to be given to the contextual factors, of both learners and educators, when communicating about HIV/AIDS.

Using metaphors and employing “selective teaching” when communicating about HIV/AIDS and related issues, are also problematic, in that these run the risk of giving rise to numerous misinterpretations and misunderstandings. The ambiguities that frequently arise within the HIV/AIDS discourse need to be adequately counteracted. Misrepresenting and defining HIV/AIDS according to Western ideology is inadequate, as it bears little, if any, relevance to African sexual behaviours and practices.

The dangers involved, in the various assumptions surrounding the HIV/AIDS discourse have also been presented in this research report. Talking around controversial and sensitive issues was a common practice in this study. This has been cited, as existing as a result of teachers being embarrassed, to talk about “difficult” and “awkward” topics, so they adopted this approach, in an attempt to avoid directly talking about such issues.

The role of the media in defining sexual behaviour and in creating meaning and understanding has also received attention in this study. The common misconceptions that arise as a result of learners' engagement with the various forms of media have also been highlighted. Non-verbal communication used by teachers, and the role that these played in supporting or counteracting the intended message, were also instrumental in influencing the meaning-making process.

The power relations that were present within the classroom context influenced the kind and quality of interaction that took place between the learners and teacher. Frequently the interaction was one-sided, with the teacher dominating much of the discussion, and the lesson in general. "Teacher talk" was the typical mode of instruction and the use of eloquent, scientific language to define key concepts and terms associated with HIV/AIDS was commonly employed. Questions posed by learners were minimal, as was the participation of learners in the lessons' activities. Assessment was typically limited to learners recalling factual information, in a test or worksheet context. Written tasks were the chief means of assessment.

5.3. Limitations of the Study

Due to the inaccessibility of parents at the institution under study, it was not possible to obtain their permission, to interview learners to obtain their perceptions on the lessons that were conducted and observed. This would have served to enrich the quality of the data obtained. Focus group interviews, involving both male and female learners, as well as learners representing the different race groups represented at the school, were also intended to be used in this study.

The intention was to explore the learners' perceptions, of the ways in which teachers employ language, to create meaning and understanding within the HIV/AIDS discourse.

This study was also done in a school where the majority of the learners were receiving instruction in English, as their second language. Certainly the meanings that these learners attached to the terms and concepts surrounding HIV/AIDS were influenced by this very fact. The extent to which this influence was exerted was not always evident in this study.

The institution under study was representative of an urban school hence the findings of this study can not be applied to rural schools. The contextual factors representing the different settings and locations of these schools are vastly different.

My own personal predispositions, opinions, morals, values, experience, preferences and religious convictions certainly have impacted on the way in which I have interpreted and assigned meaning, to the way in which teachers used language in the study. The participants' actions, as manifested in their non-verbal language, and the way I chose to read into these, is in part, a reflection of my own understanding of the terms and concepts that pervade much of the discussion on HIV/AIDS.

This very reality has, to an extent, influenced the way I have chosen to represent the participants in the study, as well as the manner in which I have reported the research project. As much as stringent measures, mentioned in the methodology section of this research report, were taken to reduce the effects of my own personal biases in this study, it was impossible to dispense with my own convictions altogether.

5.4. Recommendations in Light of the Conclusions Drawn from this Study

Since teachers' own understanding of key concepts and ideas relating to HIV/AIDS education influence the manner in which they use language to convey meaning and understanding among learners, it becomes imperative that they consciously and critically, examine their own understanding in relation to how these will be translated linguistically, so as to enhance the process of making meaning among learners. In addition, teachers need to establish the extent to which the way in which they choose to communicate about HIV/AIDS promotes or hinders understanding among learners. The teachers' own perceptions, predispositions, preferences, experience, religious and moral convictions, have to also be taken into account in this regard.

Educators need to question whether their behaviours, both verbal and non-verbal, will enhance or impede the intended message. The issues pertaining to how the message or messages concerned, will be assimilated, comprehended and acted upon, also need careful consideration. In other words, the teacher needs to consider how learners will respond to the intended message or messages.

Collaboration and consistency must be fostered between schools, religious leaders and communities in order to overcome contradictory messages. If HIV/AIDS education is to succeed, it must target all sectors of the community, including religious leaders, the media and families. Pre-existing systems of “knowledge transfer” should be taken advantage of: parents and the extended family should be targeted, for adult learning programmes that encourage them to communicate openly, positively and accurately on HIV/AIDS.

Training of educators with regard to HIV/AIDS education, needs to include suggestions as to how controversial and sensitive issues can be dealt with in the classroom, without resorting to “selective teaching” or “talking around the topic”. This will also assist in effectively dealing with the embarrassment and awkwardness that HIV/AIDS education is often met with.

There also needs to be a move away from an overly scientific approach to HIV/AIDS education. Learning materials should stimulate children to understand the human side of HIV, so they can connect the issue to real life. Learning resources on HIV/AIDS should be locally driven, drawing upon local statistics of prevalence and local case studies. Contextual and situational factors such as gender, religion, ethnicity, race, socio-economic background and culture exert a pervasive influence on the processes involved in creating understanding and making meaning within the HIV/AIDS discourse. Hence, teachers need to take these factors into consideration when designing learning activities.

The language used in material resources should be simple and in no uncertain terms, portray the intended message or messages. Any possible ambiguities that may arise need to be effectively dealt with. This can only be the case if feedback from learners, is actively encouraged on an on-going basis. Learners need to be provided with opportunities to pose questions, raise concerns and express themselves verbally and through other creative forms, such as art, poetry and drama, in an attempt to establish whether or not the intended outcomes have been achieved. It follows that assessment procedures need not be limited to written tasks.

In addition, learning activities whose outcomes depend on information exchange, and which emphasize collaboration, as well as an equal share of responsibility among learners, needs to be incorporated into these lessons on HIV/AIDS. This will also assist in helping learners and teachers redefine their role relationships, and to an extent, equalize their status as classroom participants. This will help to alleviate the effects of the power relations that are evident in the classroom.

Education that leads to positive behaviour or social change needs to look beyond skills and, in this particular context, challenge social, gender and power inequalities. HIV/AIDS education should focus on power and communication issues in wider human relationships, and in this way some of the power issues involved in sexual relationships can also be inadvertently addressed. The focus should be on life skills, with the double aim of delaying the first sexual intercourse, and encouraging protected sex.

By personalizing the risk elements involved in unsafe sexual practices through appropriate role playing, group discussions, and other alternate approaches, such as interactive teaching methods, learners can relate these scenarios to similar situations which they are confronted with, in their day to day living. This can certainly play a pivotal role in helping convert knowledge into action.

The adoption of colloquial terms, to depict and define the scientific terms that permeate much of the discussion on HIV/AIDS education can assist learners in relating newly acquired vocabulary to their real-life situations and experiences, thereby facilitating understanding. Educators need to make attempts to familiarize themselves with the less eloquent terms that learners use to describe sexual behaviours, and where it is possible, to incorporate these into their lessons, drawing upon analogies and making the learning experience, one that is relevant and appropriate, in other words, “culture-embedded”. This will serve to enrich the meaning-making process for learners.

5.5. Possible Areas of Extension of Research

As mentioned earlier, a study to investigate the learners’ perceptions of the way educators use language, to create meaning and understanding within the HIV/AIDS discourse, can be undertaken. This will serve to enhance the findings of the research conducted and create a more holistic understanding of how teachers use language to convey meaning and understanding.

Learners can be interviewed within a focus group context, as well as individually, to compare and contrast their responses across different contexts and settings. This can be done in conjunction with the observation of a series of lessons on HIV/AIDS education. Interviews following the observations can serve to bring to the fore issues that presented problems for the learners. Terms and concepts within the HIV/AIDS discourse, which are particularly problematic for learners, can also be identified. In this regard, possible recommendations to enhance the understanding of these terms and concepts can be made, creating pathways for a whole other area of research.

Educators could also be interviewed in an attempt to explore how they perceive learners would respond to their lessons. Attempts to establish how the manner in which a teacher perceives the learners will interpret what he or she is trying to say, and how those compare to the actual meanings that learners attach to the information presented to them, will serve to highlight any discrepancies between the two.

Mismatches in the understanding and meanings attached to the terms and concepts within the HIV/AIDS discourse, between learners and educators, is an area that could also be explored. Factors that contribute to the misconceptions of learners, educators, or both, can also be addressed in such a study.

The relevance of the HIV/AIDS education presented to the learners, to their real life-situations and circumstances also needs to be explored. If what is being presented to learners within the classroom context pertaining to HIV/AIDS education is irrelevant and meaningless to their real-life situations, it certainly becomes inevitable that safer sexual behaviours that are often dwelled upon within the classroom context are not being translated into practice. The influence of Western Ideology on how teachers and learners engage in discussion and dialogue on HIV/AIDS, can also present another area for research. The necessity for employing localized terms and colloquialisms, to define and describe African sexual behaviour, needs to be weighed against the advantages and disadvantages of defining such behaviour in purely scientific terms.

The notion of the “Ghetto Language” as a colloquial alternative to the formal, eloquent and scientific approach that is often adopted within the context of HIV/AIDS education also needs to be explored in detail. This could be addressed as a single study on its own. Recommendations, in an attempt to include these commonly employed colloquial terms in the discussions that emerge in the context of HIV/AIDS education, and within the classroom context, can subsequently be addressed.

The above suggestions for the extension of the research presented can be conducted across different cultures and languages, and in rural and urban settings, in an attempt to establish if there are parallels across these different contexts. Samples representing both sexes, and different religious, cultural and ethnic groups, can be included so as to allow for a greater degree of comparison to be established.

Learners, who receive instruction in their mother tongue, as well as those who receive instruction in their non-mother tongue, can be included in separate studies of a smaller scale or in the same study (obviously one of a larger scale), to explore the similarities and differences among the research findings of both samples. The influence of the language of instruction in creating meaning and understanding within the HIV/AIDS discourse will also make for an interesting study.

Whilst ideas have been presented with regard to extension of this study these are mere suggestions. They are intended to serve as guidelines for future research within the context of HIV/AIDS education. The critical questions, modes of inquiry, details pertaining to the sample type and size, are all left the discretion of the researcher and depends on the nature of the research project.

5.6. Conclusion

A characteristic feature of classroom life is the different kinds of interaction that take place within the classroom context. Sadly though, much of this interaction is confined largely to one-way interaction, dominated by the teacher. The language we use to conceptualize and engage in discussion and dialogue about HIV/AIDS, is a manifestation of our personal biases and understanding, or lack thereof. Such language also assists in shaping ours attitudes, as well as those of others', about the pandemic.

Appropriate language does not give rise to stereotypes, nor does it create prejudice. Language has a strong influence on attitudes toward HIV/AIDS, and towards people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. If we subscribe to these views, it becomes inevitable that the implications of this study for re-examining the ways in which educators employ language, to create meaning and understanding within the HIV/AIDS discourse, not be ignored.

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APPENDIX:1

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS SCHEDULE

QUESTIONS THAT WILL GUIDE THE ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTS IN THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

1. What departmental policies, regulations and other relevant documents pertinent to the area of study will be used in the study?
2. - What are the basic tenets of this document?
 - What does the document set out to do? In other words what are its' basic outcomes and broader aims?
 - How does it set out to attain these outcomes and achieve the aims?
 - What is prescriptive in this document?
 - What are suggested or recommended practices?
 - What are the expected behaviours of educators, educational managers and other stakeholders that have a vested interest in education with regard to implementation of this policy?
 - What are the practical implications of this document?
3. What is the backdrop against which this document has emerged? (An examination of the historical background and the context within which the document emerged will receive attention here)
4. - What are some of the common terms and concepts that keep presenting themselves in these documents? (Here an attempt to identify key concepts and terms associated with HIV/AIDS will be made)
 - In what context are these used?
 - Are these open to various interpretations?
 - Are these synonymous with other cultural representations of the same terms and concepts? (This will be explored in conjunction with the literature reviewed on the area of study)
5. – What message or messages are being communicated in the document?
 - Are these communicated clearly and are they presented in a logical manner?
 - Are there any ambiguities that emerge? What are these?
6. -What is my understanding of this document?
 - What has shaped and influenced my understanding of this document? How so?
7. – How will educators engage with this document?
 - What are some of the factors that will influence how they engage with and make meaning of this document?
 - How can teachers access this information into forms that can be easily conveyed, to and understood by learners within the school context?

The above set of questions was applied to all the documents that were examined in the study.

APPENDIX : 2

PRE- OBSERVATION INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR **LIFE ORIENTATION EDUCATORS**

1. How familiar are you with the contents of The National Policy on HIV/AIDS for Learners and Educators in Public Schools, and for Learners and Educators in Further Education Training Institutions (1999)?
2. -Is there a school policy on HIV/AIDS in existence?
 - Do you have access to the policy?
 - Do you know the contents of this policy?
 - What is your interpretation and understanding of this policy?
 - What are the practical implications of this policy within the classroom context?
3. -What material resources have been forthcoming/ made available to you regarding the execution of HIV/AIDS intervention programmes?
 - What are your views on these materials? Is the vocabulary used age-appropriate for the learners you teach? Are the meanings of unknown concepts and words explained?
 - Is the information presented in a clear, logical and simple manner? Does it facilitate easy understanding? Does it allow for easy comprehension of the concepts covered by involving the reader? Provide examples.
 - Is the text used in these materials implicit in its meaning, or does it leave itself open to multiple interpretations? Give examples.
 - Comment on the visual quality of these materials. Are they suitable for use in the classroom? Do they support the message that is intended to be conveyed?
 - How are you able to bridge the gap between your learners' own knowledge and that which is conveyed in these resources in an attempt to make the information more accessible to learners?
4. -What attempts have been made at the following levels to develop and workshop the contents of the above-mentioned policies :
 - a. Department level-
 - b. School level-
 - c. Personal level-?
 - Did you participate in these workshops?
 - Would you consider these workshops to have been valuable?
 - How has this training helped shape and inform your awareness on HIV/AIDS education? Give examples.

5. -What HIV/AIDS intervention initiatives, with regard to teacher development have been made at school level to assist educators with the implementation of these policies?
 -What “new” knowledge did you gain as a result of your participation in these programmes?
 - How has your perceptions and knowledge changed? Why? Could you give an example to illustrate this change or these changes?

6. -How has the knowledge and insight gained as a result of your engagement with the policies and material resources mentioned above, as well as through your participation in training and teacher development programmes, influenced how you engage with learners in dialogue and discussion on HIV/AIDS?
 - How do you relate new information to what your learners already know?

7. -What terms and concepts associated with HIV/AIDS can be perceived as being ambiguous? Why?
 - Give examples of some ambiguities that you have encountered in your teaching practice?
 -What is it about these terms and concepts that leave them open to a variety of meanings?
 - How do you attempt to deal with such ambiguities in the classroom context? Please elaborate.

8. - How has the existence of learners from diverse cultural backgrounds influenced your teaching practices? Give examples.
 -What attempts have been made to accommodate this diversity among learners so as to contribute to the notion of a “shared understanding”?
 -How do you engage learners in discussion around HIV/AIDS which value, activate and draw on learners’ existing knowledge and experience in an attempt to facilitate understanding? Give examples.
 - Do you think that “shared understanding” is possible within a multicultural context? Why?
 - What are some of the factors that impede such an understanding?

9. Multicultural classrooms are indicative of being confronted with English Second Language or English Non-Mother Tongue Language speakers? What implications does this have for creating a shared understanding of the terms and concepts commonly associated with HIV/AIDS? What attempts have been made by you to accommodate these learners within the classroom context so as to facilitate maximum understanding?
 - Are you able to communicate in any language other than English?
 -Have you been afforded the opportunity to receive any training in Zulu or any other non-mother tongue language? How has this impacted on the process of making meaning and understanding among learners?

10. - What assessment procedures do you use to assess the outcomes of the lessons and the learning activities?
- Do you employ a range of assessment techniques or do you use a single instrument to determine the extent to which the lessons have achieved their intended outcomes? Why?
 - Are learners fully aware of these assessment procedures and the criteria used? Is an explanation offered to them preceding the assessment procedures or after these have taken place?
 - Do you believe that these assessment procedures are an accurate reflection of the learners' understanding of the lessons' content? Why?
 - Do you feel that these assessment procedures provide a useful means of feedback in terms of your teaching? How so?
 - What are some of the limitations of these assessment tools?
 - How does this feedback help you to reflect on and review your teaching practices?

The above questions will only serve as a guideline in the interview process. Ultimately the responses of the participants and the probes of the researcher, will serve to initiate additional questions, thereby enriching the quality of data obtained.

APPENDIX: 3

LESSON OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

QUESTIONS THAT WILL GUIDE THE OBSERVATION PROCESS

1. What is the nature of the lesson? Is the lesson the mere conveying of factual information, or is it skills- based and does it incorporate problem-solving?
2. Who dominates the lesson? Is the lesson teacher-centered, learner-centered or is there two-way interaction? How does evidence of this present itself?
3. What kind of learning environment has been created? Is it tense, uneasy, quiet, disruptive, chaotic or relaxed? What kind of rapport exists between the learners and the teacher?
4. What attempts have been made to involve learners in the lesson? Are learners encouraged to ask questions? What kinds of questions do they ask? How does the teacher respond to these questions? How does the teacher draw on learners' existing knowledge and experiences to create meaning and understanding among learners or are these ignored altogether?
5. How do learners respond to questions posed by the teacher? What kinds of questions does the teacher ask? How are these questions phrased?
6. What gestures, facial expressions, posture, eye contact and other forms of body language are evident? How do these add to or conversely contradict the meaning of what is being conveyed? How do the learners respond to the teacher's body language, and vice-versa? Does the teacher's body language reflect and support the intended outcomes of the lesson? (Examples of how these manifest themselves will be noted)
7. What other forms of non- verbal behaviour and language are evident? How do other learners in the classroom react to this?
8. Is the lesson well structured? Does it progress logically and coherently or is it disjointed? What evidence is there that learners follow the progression of the lesson?
9. What materials and resources are used in the lesson? Are these appropriate and relevant to the content of the lesson? How do learners respond to these materials and resources?

10. What if any, areas of discussion (terms/concepts/ideas/subject matter/topic) appear to pose difficulties for the:
- a) teacher,
 - b) learners?

How do these present themselves? Are these detected by the:

- a) teacher,
- b) learner?

What attempts (if any) are made to resolve these difficulties?

11. Is there evidence of sensitivity towards gender, culture, religion and race? If so, how do these manifest themselves?
12. Does the teacher use repetition and reiteration as techniques to enhance clarity and understanding? What other techniques does the teacher use to facilitate meaning and understanding? (Examples of these would be noted)
13. What learning activities are used? Are they related and relevant to the area of study? (Details of these would be recorded)
14. How are the outcomes of the lesson being assessed? Are assessment tools singular or multi-modal in nature?
15. What evidence is there that learners are aware of what is being assessed and what the assessment procedures entail?
16. What evidence is there to show that the intended objectives of the lessons have been achieved?

OTHER GENERAL OBSERVATIONS WILL BE NOTED TO GAIN A HOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT TRANSPIRES WITHIN THE CLASSROOM DURING THAT PARTICULAR OBSERVATION SESSION

APPENDIX: 4

POST-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LIFE ORIENTATION EDUCATORS

1. Having just completed a series of lessons on HIV/AIDS awareness, do you think the objectives of these lessons were accomplished fully? What would you cite as being the reason or reasons for this?
2. How has your engagement with and knowledge of key concepts associated with HIV/AIDS helped to execute your lessons dealing with this subject matter?
3. -To what extent do you believe your non-verbal behaviour, including body language (gestures, posture, eye contact and facial expressions) have influenced the meaning making process among learners?
-Do you believe that these have supported or hampered the intended outcomes of the lessons in any way? Give examples.
- How may these non-verbal behaviours given rise to any ambiguities?
- How do you think these were perceived by the learners?
-Were the employment of these non-verbal behaviours intentional or incidental?
Please elaborate.
4. -What significance do you attach to the use of repetition and questioning to clarify and convey meaning? Give an example or examples of instances in the lessons observed where repetition was used to convey a particular meaning.
- According to you, how would repeating this affect behaviour change?
-How has this influenced your use of these strategies in the classroom context?
- What influenced the way in which you phrased the questions? Why?
5. – What cues do you take from the learners in the progression of lessons? Are there signs that you look out for before proceeding to the next stage of the lesson?
-Give examples of these that were evident in the lessons observed.

The above questions merely provides a possible framework for discussion. The observation sessions and the teachers' responses to the pre-observation interview questions will form the basis of the post-observation interviews. Hence the above questions will be modified. The interrogated mode of inquiry will be used in these sessions. Any discrepancies between how the educators responded in the interviews preceding the observations and what actually transpired in the lessons will have to be accounted for. This is where the participants responses will be interrogated. Any mismatch between the researchers' interpretation of the chain of events that unfolded in the classroom and the participants explanations of such occurrences will also receive attention. The intention is to provide a detailed analysis of the data obtained during the data collection process, so as to bring to the fore the factors(contextual or otherwise) that influence the language teachers use within the discourse on HIV/AIDS.

A. PREAMBLE

- 1) In SA HIV is spread mainly through sexual contact between men and woman; babies born to HIV - infected woman will be infected at birth or through breast - feeding.
- 2) Contact with HIV - infected blood, intravenous drug use and homosexual sex constitutes a very small proportion of all infections.
- 3) Blood transfusions are thoroughly screened and chances of infection from transfusion are extremely low.
- 4) 2 Phases :

Asymptomatic Period

- person infected with HIV but does not develop AIDS.
- for 5 - 8 years the person feels well and remains productive members of families and workforces.
- can pass on infection without realizing that they are HIV infected.
- virus weakens immune system.
- person shows symptoms of skin rashes, diarrhoea, weight loss, fevers, swollen lymph glands and certain cancers.

Symptomatic Period

- show severe infections or cancers.
- die within 1 - 2 years of AIDS.

B. PREMISES

- 1) Many children who acquire HIV prenatally will, with adequate medical care will reach school going age. Therefore a large proportion of the learner population and educators are at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.
- 2) HIV cannot be transmitted through day to day social contact but through blood, semen, vaginal and cervical fluid, and breast milk.
- 3) Compulsory disclosure of a learners or educators HIV/AIDS status is not advocated. In case of disclosure, educators must be prepared to handle such disclosures and be given support to handle confidentiality issues.

- 4) Learners with HIV/AIDS should not be denied education; likewise educators should lead as full a professional life as possible without any unfair discrimination being practiced against them.
- 5) Infection control measures must be universally applied and carried out regardless of the known and unknown HIV status of individual concerned.
- 6) To reduce HIV transmission, standard infection control procedures, universal precautions and good hygiene practices must be followed.
- 7) Risk of HIV transmission during teaching sport and play activities is insignificant. No risk from saliva, sweat, urine, respiratory droplets, hand shaking, swimming pool water, toilets, food or drinking water. However this only holds true if universal precautions are followed.
- 8) Adequate wound management in the classroom, laboratory and sports ground has to take place when learner sustains an open wound.
- 9) Many sexually active learners who will increase risk of HIV transmission. Sexuality education, morality and life skills education must be provided.
- 10) Learners with infectious illnesses such as measles, chicken pox, etc, should be kept away from school to protect all other members of the school, especially those whose immune systems may be impaired by HIV/AIDS.
- 11) Life skills education must emphasize abstinence and must be integrated in the curriculum.
- 12) Purpose of education about HIV/AIDS :
 - to prevent the spread of infection
 - to allay excessive fears of the epidemic
 - reduce stigma attached to it
 - instill non - discriminatory attitudes towards persons with HIV/AIDS

- 13) All educators should be trained to give guidance on HIV/AIDS.

C. Non - discrimination and Equality with regard to Learners, Students and Educators with HIV/AIDS

- 1) No learner and educator with HIV/AIDS should be unfairly discriminated against.
- 2) Learners educators and other staff with HIV/AIDS should be treated in a just, humane and life - affirming way.
- 3) To prevent discrimination, all learners and educators should be educated about fundamental human rights.

D. HIV/AIDS TESTING; ADMISSION OF LEARNERS; APPOINTMENT OF EDUCATORS :

- 1) No learner to be denied admission due to his/her AID status.
- 2) No educator may be denied the right to be appointed in a post; to teach or be promoted on account of his / her AIDS status.
- 3) There should be no routine testing of learners and educators.

E. ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOLS BY LEARNERS WITH HIV/AIDS

- 1) Learners with HIV have the right to attend any school.
- 2) Learners are expected to attend classes in accordance with statutory requirements for as long as they are able to do so effectively.
- 3) Learners of compulsory school - going age, who are unable to benefit from attending school maybe granted exemption.
- 4) If learner becomes uncapacitated through illness the school should make work available for studying at home.
- 5) Learners with HIV/AIDS related behavioural problems or neurological damage should be accommodated in special schools.

F. DISCLOSURE & CONFIDENTIALITY

- 1) No learner (or parent on behalf of a learner) or educator is compelled to disclose his / her HIV/AIDS status.
- 2) Voluntary disclosure should be welcomed, confidentiality should be ensured and unfair discrimination is not tolerated. Any learner above the age of 14 years, or if the learner is younger than 14 years, the parent is free to disclose information voluntarily.
- 3) A holistic programme for life skills and HIV/AIDS education should encourage disclosure.
- 4) Divulged information must be CONFIDENTIAL.
- 5) Unauthorized disclosure could give rise to LEGAL LIABILITY.

G. A SAFE SCHOOL AND INSTITUTION ENVIRONMENT

- 1) UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS to be implemented.
 - a) Assume that all persons are potentially infected and all blood should be treated as such. All blood, open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin grazes, open skin lesions, all body fluids and excretions stained or contaminated with blood (tears, saliva, mucus, phlegm, urine, vomit, faeces and pus) should be treated as potentially infectious.
 - large spills of blood eg. nose bleeds, old blood, blood stains - treat with extreme caution.
 - wash skin exposed to blood with soap & running water immediately.
 - all bleeding wounds should be cleaned immediately with running water and / or other antiseptics.
 - in biting or scratching incident where the skin is broken, the wound should be washed and cleansed under running water, dried, apply antiseptic and cover with waterproof dressing.
 - blood splashes to the face (eye, nose, mouth), flush with running water for at least 3 minutes.
 - sanitary wear must be disposed in disposable bags and incinerators.
 - b) Open wounds at all times must be covered with a non - porous, waterproof dressing.
 - c) Persons attending to another persons wounds must wear latex

gloves or plastic bags.

- d) Blood contaminated material should be sealed in a plastic bag and incinerated; tissues and toilet paper must be flushed away.
 - e) If instruments (eg. scissors) become contaminated, wash and place in strong household bleach for at least one hour before drying and using.
- 2) Learners, educators and staff must train in FIRST AID. FIRST AID KITS should contain :
- a) Two large; two medium pairs of disposable latex gloves.
 - b) Two large; two medium pairs of household rubber gloves for handling blood soaked material.
 - c) Absorbent material, waterproof plasters, disinfectant, scissors, cotton wool, gauze tape, tissues, containers for water, resuscitation mouth piece.
 - d) Protective eyewear.
 - e) Protective face mask to cover nose and mouth.
- 3) LESS SOPHISTICATED DEVICES that could be used include :
- a) Unbroken plastic bags on hands.
 - b) Common household bleach, diluted 1 part bleach : 10 parts water.
 - c) Spectacles.
 - d) A scarf.
- 4) Latex / household gloves must be in each classroom: available at sports events and carried by playground supervisors.
- 5) First aid kits should be available at all school events, outings and tours.
- 6) All learners, educators and other staff members should have appropriate information and training on HIV transmission, handling and use of first aid kits, universal precautions.
- 7) Learners, educators and other staff members should be trained to manage their own bleeding / injuries and to assist others.
- 8) Learners must be instructed never to touch the blood open wounds, etc, of others and must call an educator for assistance.

- 9) Learners must be taught that all lesions, open wounds, etc, must be covered with waterproof dressings at all times.
- 10) All cleaning staff, learners, educators, parents should be informed about the UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS.

H. PREVENTION OF HIV TRANSMISSION DURING SPORT AND PLAY

- 1) The risk of HIV transmission due to contact play/sport is generally insignificant but never the less :
- a) The risk increases where open sores, grazes, etc, are exposed to infected blood.
 - b) Certain contact sports may represent an increased risk of HIV transmission.
- 2) Adequate wound management, universal precautions is essential.
- a) No learner / educators may participate in contact play with an open wound, sore, open skin lesion, etc.
 - b) If bleeding occurs, the injured player should be removed and treated appropriately. Only then may the injured player resume playing and only for as long as any open wound, sore, graze, etc, remains completely or securely covered.
 - c) Blood - stained clothes must be changed.
- 3) Fully equipped first aid kit should be available during any contact sport.
- 4) Sports participants, including coaches with HIV/AIDS should seek medical counselling before participation in sports.
- 5) Sports administrators/managers/coaches must ensure first aid kits are available and universal precautions are applied.
- 6) Sports administrators/managers/coaches must educate participants on HIV/AIDS. Encourage them to seek medical and other appropriate counselling.

I. EDUCATION ON HIV/AIDS

- 1) A continuing life skills and HIV/AIDS education programme must be implemented.
- 2) Age appropriate education on HIV/AIDS must form part of the curriculum. This includes :
 - a) Provide information on HIV/AIDS, develop life skills.
 - b) Inculcate basic first aid principles from an early age.
 - c) Emphasize role of drugs, sexual abuse and violence, STDS.
 - d) Encourage learners to make use of health care, counselling and support services.
 - e) Educate learners on appropriate behaviour towards persons with HIV/AIDS.
 - f) Cultivating a culture of non - discrimination towards persons with HIV/AIDS.
 - g) Provide information on abstinence, immorality, use of condoms, faithfulness, obtaining prompt medical treatment for STD and TB; avoiding contact with blood, universal precautions.
- 3) Information regarding AIDS must be given in an accurate and scientific manner and in language and terms that are understandable.
- 4) Parents must be informed about all life skills and HIV/AIDS education offered at the school; the learning content; methodology; values that will be imparted. They must participate in parental guidance sessions and be aware of their roles as sexuality educators and imparters of values at home.
- 5) No sexual relations between educators and learners - refer to Employment Act 1998.

J. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEARNERS, EDUCATORS, PARENTS

- 1) All learners and educators should respect the rights of others.

- 2) Code of conduct must include the unacceptability of behaviour that may create the risk of HIV transmission.
- 3) Responsibility for the behaviour of a learner rests with his/her parents.
- 4) HIV positive persons should seek medical opinion to assess whether he/she poses a medically recognised significant health risk to others. The principal should be notified of such a risk and take the necessary steps to ensure the health and safety of others at the institution.
- 5) Educators must ensure the rights and dignity of all learners and educators are respected and protected.

K. REFUSAL TO STUDY WITH / TEACH A LEARNER WITH HIV/AIDS / WORK WITH / BE TAUGHT BY AN EDUCATOR WITH HIV/AIDS

- 1) Accurate and understandable information on HIV/AIDS must be provided to avoid the above refusal.
- 2) Learners / educators who refuse the above should be counselled.
- 3) Principals and educators should resolve the situation accordingly. If the matter is unresolved through counselling and mediation, disciplinary steps may be taken.

L. HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- 1) Each school should establish its own Health Advisory Committee.
- 2) Committee should be set up by the SGB.

Prepared by G. Chetty - Mountview Secondary School - 2001

- i) [Due to the policy being summarised, I would like to apologise if the meaning of any sentence/paragraph, etc, has changed.]
- ii) [Please refer to National Education Policy Act 1996 (No 27 of 1996) for further clarification.]

APPENDIX: 6
INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Participant

I am embarking on a research project to explore the language employed by primary school educators within the discourse on HIV/AIDS preventative education. This is in part-fulfillment of the requirements of The Masters Degree in Educational Management and Leadership, which I am currently pursuing at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. Your participation in this study is humbly requested.

Since Life Orientation is the medium through which this area receives attention, this is the learning area on which I will focus. The study involves interviews and observations of your lessons your learning area. Your anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research project, as well as in the reporting of the research, is assured. You are at liberty to withdraw from the study at any given stage, as your participation is purely voluntary. Please complete the consent form below should you decide to participate in the study. (Don't hesitate to enquire should you have any concerns about your participation in the study)

Yours faithfully

S. Maharajh(Researcher)

Consent of Participation (To be Completed by Participant)

I _____(FULL NAME), willingly and knowingly volunteer to participate in this study. I am aware that the findings of this research will be reported in a dissertation for a Masters Degree. Further I am aware that my participation in this study is purely voluntary and I reserve the right to withdraw from this study at any given time. My anonymity has been assured to me by the researcher, as has been issues relating to confidentiality in the reporting of the data obtained in the research.

Participant's Signature

Date